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TO-MORROW

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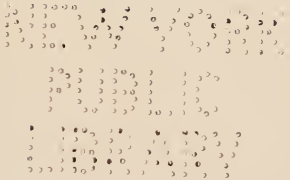
TO-MORROW

A Play in Three Acts

BY

PERCY MACKAYE

SECOND EDITION



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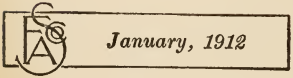

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PREFACE

In our age, which is opening new vistas of leadership for women, the concept and opportunity of woman as the creative arbiter, through selection, of our race and its future, must constitute a living theme for national thought and action.

At a time, also, when the racial meanings of childhood are being deeply considered, the concept and opportunity of children as the creative instruments of a happier to-morrow, must become a practical issue in education.

Of all demonstrable visions, the truths of biology give perhaps the securest pledge of beauty and happiness for the race — a pledge more fair and true than the earlier prophecies of a poetry divorced from science.

For the social, political, religious aspects of our life are radically conditioned by the biological.

Since man himself is the master-sower of our planet, the nature of the human seed itself practically determines the sowing and the harvest of mankind. All contemporary problems, for instance — such as those of labor and capital, conservation, temperance,

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white slavery — exist primarily in the nature of human beings, conditioned by the laws of heredity. Heredity thus becomes the prime factor of a constructive future for the race.

While heredity remained a mysterious force unanalyzed, it naturally took on those aspects of an immutable fate so vividly delineated in the ancient Greek tragedies, and still hauntingly shadowed forth in the plays of Ibsen.

Fundamentally reduced, however, to law, and definitely related to mathematics, by the rediscovery of the law of Mendel within the last decade, the truths of heredity appear radically to modify the human meanings of fate, and permanently to condition predestination by the growth of reason.

Mendel's discovery is, to be sure, only a beginning in his great field, but it is apparently a beginning as revolutionary as the discoveries of Copernicus and Newton in theirs, and gives promise of being eventually as influential upon human society. Generations, perhaps centuries, may have to elapse before man shall be able to apply the laws of heredity as definitely to his own destiny as to that of plants and animals; but the demonstration that he may with reason make it his aim to do so, dates from our own day.

Essentially related to the new science of eugenics, Mendelism has as yet hardly begun to influence art

or popular feeling. It is, however, the chief basis of positive, constructive eugenics, as medical research is the chief basis of negative eugenics.

Positive eugenics is concerned with the improvement of the human breed, through selection; negative eugenics — with its safeguarding from racial poisons, through the spread of medical knowledge.

Both aspects are, of course, incalculably important.

Emphasizing the negative aspect, the dramatic work of Brieux has doubtless performed the foremost pioneering of modern art. The negative emphasis, however, has perhaps necessarily veiled the constructive vision of beauty and joy inherent in the positive aspect.

Our world is hideously unhappy, and the insufferable sense of that is the consecration of modern leaders in art. Reality is splendidly their incentive. But reality, thank God, is not merely actually hideous and sad; it is also potentially beautiful and joyous. That happy potentiality is no romantic dream; it is based in reason and mathematical law. To suggest it in art, in order to actualize it in life, is also the important office and privilege of artists dedicated to reality.

Joy is not essentially less dramatic than sorrow, though undoubtedly it is more difficult to dramatize, because joy is experienced far less than pain by

those vast numbers, whom the drama must appeal to. Therefore undoubtedly a more compelling dramatic interest lies in those tragic conflicts inherent in negative eugenics than in those more serene, constructive aspects, which make the vision of to-morrow beautiful.

To suggest the latter in portraying a phase of the former, has been an incentive in writing this play.

The theme, of course, is big with a thousand plays, differing in treatment. In this one, the overtones of the theme have been for me the alluring motives.

No subject of tremendous social importance has ever won the public ear without controversy. Eugenics is no exception. New as its name is, already it has numerous connotations, social, medical, political. Already it has its incipient parties.

In this preface I refer to it in no controversial sense. In the play it is not I, but the *dramatis personæ*, who refer to it. Its own essential vitality must tend to free it from the arch enemy of human growth — dogmatism.

The thoroughbreeding of humanity is too vast a theme for the dictatorship of prejudice. In a new and radical sense, its study is certain to illumine the age-worn adage:

"The proper study of mankind — is man."

P. M-K.

Cornish, New Hampshire,
October, 1911.

CHARACTERS

PETER DALE, *Plant-Breeder.*
MANA,* *His Daughter.*
MARK FREEMAN, *His Assistant.*
MRS. HENSHAWE.
JULIAN, *Her Son: of the State Senate.*
ROSALIE, *a Child.*
REV. IGNATIUS SPOFFORD.
PROF. RAEBURN, *Biologist: of the State University.*
WESTGATE, *Lumberman.*
MISS WINCH, *Reporter.*
A CHAUFFEUR.
A TRAINED NURSE.
Mexican and Japanese Laborers.

SCENES

ACT I.—*Peter Dale's garden, in northern California; afternoon.*

ACT II.—*Among the cypresses, on the Pacific coast; evening and night.*

ACT III.— *The garden again; late afternoon of the next day.*

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* Pronounced: Mah-na.

ACT FIRST

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ACT FIRST

The garden of Peter Dale, *in northern California. On the right is visible the end of a greenhouse, beside which vines are growing. Through the open door are seen tables, reaching beyond sight; on these are low boxes filled with seedling plants. Around the corner of the greenhouse, up scene, a path leads to a gate, beyond view, and a roadway, also unseen but indicated by its border of tall eucalyptus trees, in the right background.*

The groundplan of the scene is filled with beds of bright flowers — poppies, amaryllis, and other varied species — through which a broad central path leads back to another which crosses it in the middleground; this is bordered behind by tall cactus plants in bloom, and here the central path ends. Beyond the cactus bed, an orchard of young fruit trees stretches green toward dull-golden mountains and bright azure sky. The immediate foreground is a wide path which divides, on the left, around the circle of a pool, with lilies. Beside the broad, cement margin of this pool, a curved bench stands beneath ilex trees. Behind this bench the path leads off, left.

It is early afternoon. Shimmering sunlight intensifies the colors of the flowers. Midway the central path, the still figure of PETER DALE *stands contemplating. He is dressed in a gray swallow-tail suit of antedated style. Under a wide palm-leaf, Chinese hat, pointed at the crown, his short, white hair accentuates the ruddy sunburn of his shaven face and fine-cut features. With both hands folded over a large blank-book, he gazes, in quizzical quiet, at a flower beside him. From nearby, on the right, the thin, sweet voice of a child is heard lilting to an improvised melody:*

THE CHILD'S VOICE

Starfish, starfish,
Answer me the wish I wish!

PETER *turns toward the sound, with a pensive smile, over which comes a shade of sadness; then, turning again to the flower, he takes from his pocket a piece of white string, squats on one heel in the path, and ties the string to the plant's stalk, jotting a note in his book with a pencil.*

THE CHILD'S VOICE

With my fingers in the dark
I can feel your thorny spark:
By its light, how far — how far
Is a starfish from a star?

Around the corner of the greenhouse, the tall, spare form of MARK FREEMAN *comes slowly striding. He is a young man, about twenty-five, powerful in build, sinewy like a mountaineer. His strong face is sun-tanned; his brown arms are bare below the rolled sleeves of a red shirt thrust into khaki trousers. On his shoulders — with one hand clutching a starfish, the other* MARK'S *collar — a little girl rides pig-a-back, her bright curls fluttering close to his tumbled, dark hair. Arriving in the foreground,* MARK *swings the child down upon her feet by the greenhouse door, against which he places her empty hand. Feeling the door-frame and the vines with a quick touch, she stands a moment, groping, while* MARK *gazes down at her. Then confidently she walks, with outstretched hands —* MARK *following her — to the edge of the pool, where she sits and plays with the starfish. By her actions it is evident that she cannot see.* PETER *rises, and the two men look at the child with tenderness.*

PETER

Keeps happy.

MARK

Always just so.

ROSALIE

[*Without looking up.*]

Hello, Father Peter!

PETER

Hello, Goldylocks!

[PETER *leads* MARK *toward the flower, and points to the white string.* MARK *ejaculates with pleasure.*]

MARK

What? — No!

PETER

There's the fellow we've been waiting for.

MARK

Blue! — the blue poppy!

[*At the pool,* ROSALIE *dips the starfish in and out of the water, lilting to her rhythmic motion.*]

ROSALIE

Sea-star, sea-star,
Say who wished us what we are!

PETER

[*Examining the poppy with* MARK.]

Just a shade too purple: a shade yet.

ROSALIE

[*Haltingly.*]

By your sharp and prickly light —
Through the numb and awful night

From Amœba — to Arcturus —
Who shall lead and reassure us?

[*Calling.*]

Mark! What's Amœba?

MARK

Now that's telling, Rosalie. Ask the master.

ROSALIE

Father Peter, *you* tell! I know Arcturus: That's the big Shasta daisy that grows in the garden up there [*Pointing overhead*] when I'm asleep. And there's lots and lots of littler ones. Mana says so.

From Amœba to Arcturus —

PETER

Did Mana teach you that?

ROSALIE

Yes, but she didn't say about Amœba. What's Amœba?

PETER

Amœba was the first water-baby. He was the daddy of Jack and Jill. But that's Once-upon-a-time!

[*He sits on the bench.* ROSALIE *jumps to her feet and reaches toward him.*]

ROSALIE

Oh, it's a story!

PETER

'Most as old as Mother Morey.

[*Taking her outstretched hands,* PETER *nestles her to him.*]

ROSALIE

[*Cosily.*]

Tell me!

PETER

Well, it was this way. Mother Morey — you know Mother Morey?

[ROSALIE *nods.*]

Well, her given maiden name was Nature. Now, quite some time before the *Mayflower* landed, she got married to Old Morey.

ROSALIE

What was *his* maiden name?

PETER

Well, his front name was Phœbus. He was a bright, warm-hearted fellow — Old Phœbus Morey. When he married Mother Nature, they picked out a little, round, span-new bungalow, called the world, and started in housekeeping. Morey boiled the kettle, and Mother sprinkled the salt. So they got along nicely. But by and by, Mother she began to fuss.

"Now, now, Mother," says Old Morey, "what's the matter?"

"There's *matter* enough, Phœbus," says she, "but there's no little home folks here to cook it for."

"What's the good o' fussing?" says he.

"What's the good o' cooking for just ourselves," says she.

So Mother Nature she fussed and fussed, till one warm morning, when she was stirring the salt water, she peeked into the kettle, and there — sitting right in the bubbles — guess what she found!

ROSALIE

What?

PETER

A wee mite of a rolypoly jelly-belly water-baby!

ROSALIE

Oh, *was* it Amœba?

PETER

Amœba it was, sure enough.

"Do look, Phœbus dear!" says she. "Isn't this a promising boy?"

"He'll do for a start-off, Mother. Guess we'll make a man of him yet."

"I do believe," says Mother, "I do believe he's growing already!"

And just then — while they were talking — Amœba began to puff himself. He puffed and he puffed, till — piff!

ROSALIE

What happened?

PETER

Amœba was gone!

ROSALIE

Where?

PETER

Split clean in half: There was two of him! One was Jack and t'other was Jill; and right then and there they crawled out of the sticky salt water, and began to climb up that hill.

[PETER *rises and takes* ROSALIE *by the hand.*]

ROSALIE

The one Jack fell down?

PETER

That same old stumble-up and tumble-down hill!

[*He begins to lead her up the central path.*]

And do you know, Goldylocks: from that day, all the Jacks and Jills in the world have been hunting for the wonderful well-water 'way up on the hilltop.

ROSALIE

Will they ever find it?

PETER

Maybe, maybe. If they don't scramble and scratch and pull each other down, like silly children;

and if they learn how to listen to old Mother Nature — *I* guess they will.

ROSALIE

[*Pulling loose from* PETER's *hand.*]

Follow me, Father Peter!

[*She moves lightly ahead of him, with outstretched hands.*]

I know the garden. *I* know the paths.

[*Along the middleground path, she goes off, left, through the flowers, humming to herself:*]

Jack and Jill
Went up the hill —

PETER

[*Following the child, looks back with a quaint smile.*]

It's "follow your leader," Mark: the blind still leading the blind.— Coming along?

MARK

Count on me, sir, for *your* procession.

[*Pausing,* PETER *looks back at* MARK, *with kindly scrutiny.*]

PETER

Thanks. I *am* counting on you, Mark. Looks like maybe there's a big stumble ahead, for some of us — where that little one is leading.

MARK

A stumble?

PETER

In the dark.— Two weeks she's been here?

MARK

Just about.

PETER

And Mana's a great sight fond of her.

MARK

Grows fonder every day.

PETER

Noticed it?

MARK

It's mighty plain. What's wrong about it?

PETER

[*Looking again in* MARK's *face, with friendly gaze.*]
There's my hand.

MARK

There's mine, sir.

[*They clasp hands.*]

PETER

That's all. If anything *should* go wrong in the garden, I guess I can count on a right-hander.

MARK

And proud of your confidence, sir.

[PETER *turns away, left. Glancing affectionately*

toward MARK, *and shaking his own left hand playfully with his right, he goes off.* MARK, *taking a pronged iron from beside the greenhouse, begins to follow him, but stops at the head of the central path to look at a bed of seedling cacti. Here, with his back turned, he stoops down and begins to uproot the seedlings with the iron prong. From the right is heard the click and closing of a gate, and soon, along the middleground path, there enters a man of about thirty-five, simply dressed in gray, with a straw Panama hat. He is quiet-mannered, and wears glasses, behind which his eyes twinkle pleasantly. He is about to pass* MARK, *but looking closer, touches him on the shoulder.*]

THE MAN

Well, well: Mark Freeman!

[*Looking up,* MARK *gets to his feet with a smile.*]

MARK

Professor Raeburn! Glad to see you, sir.

RAEBURN

[*Shaking* MARK'S *hand.*]

What are you doing here?

MARK

Back again with the master.

RAEBURN

Lucky fellow! So it's all flowers with you now.

MARK

Well, flowers, fruit trees, berry vines, and — just plain plants.

RAEBURN

Experimenting?

MARK

Always at it. He's made another vegetable lately: potatoes grafted on tomato vines. He's still testing it.

RAEBURN

And what a glorious laboratory you have here! This is better than ours in the university. We miss you over there, Freeman: you and that rare fellow-student of yours.

MARK

Miss Dale, you mean.

RAEBURN

She was one in a lifetime. Do you know, before she came to my class, I had taught biology for years, and never knew it was poetry. *She* taught me that. Wonder how she did it!

MARK

Just enjoyed it, I guess.

RAEBURN

That's it. Nothing is dull to her. I call her the joy-dynamo. Everything she touches shoots out sparks of pleasure. She seems as happy to compute the orbit of a star as to ride a wild bronco bareback.

MARK

That's her raising, sir.

RAEBURN

I wish there were more raised like her!

MARK

There may be — in California.

RAEBURN

You're right, Freeman: Here is the kingdom of To-morrow.— Which reminds me: Have you seen the plans for our new state-house?

MARK

No.

RAEBURN

Well, there's to be a dome on it, decorated with paintings — Art, Philosophy, Law — allegorical figures: the same old, worn-out goddesses. If I had my say, you know what I'd do?

MARK

What's that?

RAEBURN

Scrape the walls clean of 'em all, and place there instead, high up — no, not a painting, but an image, lighted mysteriously: a young girl, strong like a man, reaching upward, half seen through incense; and under her foot — a starfish, and over her forehead — a star.

MARK

[*Thoughtfully.*]

That's queer.

RAEBURN

What?

MARK

[*Touching with his prong the starfish on the ground, murmurs aloud.*]

That's what the child just now —

RAEBURN

[*More to himself than to* MARK.]

And to name our new goddess, I'd have painted dimly in gold around the dome, one word: TO-MORROW.

MARK

To-morrow: that's her name, you know.

RAEBURN

Miss Dale's name?

MARK

Mana. I called her that when we were kids together — back in the mountains. We were neighbors there, in the redwoods. She had an old Mexican nurse, so she used to prattle Spanish. I only understood one word: *Mañana,* To-morrow. I used to make fun of her with it. *Mana,* I called her. Mary's her given name, but Mana has always stuck to her.

RAEBURN

Mana — the maiden To-morrow! Yes, that's fitting: The old procrastinating word of the dreamy dons Americanized, made brief, to name the opposite spirit of our new age: to-morrow, foresight, dreams that act and look forward — that's Mana.

[*Along the middleground path, left,* ROSALIE *enters, and passes — groping with outreached hands — behind the greenhouse.* RAEBURN *watches her curiously, and turns to* MARK.]

Who was that?

MARK

A little waif girl.

RAEBURN

[*With a gesture.*]

Is she —?

MARK

Blind — yes. Mana brought her here from the asylum about a fortnight ago.

RAEBURN

What — adopted her?

MARK

No; she's been adopted by a friend of Mana's; Mr. Henshawe. He's interested in charities.

RAEBURN

Not Julian Henshawe? — the young senator?

MARK

He's the man.

RAEBURN

That's good news. I'm glad to know he's interested in the blind. I've got to see him about passing our new eugenics bill. That may help to stop some nameless causes of blindness.

MARK

How's that?

RAEBURN

By preventing the congenitally blind — from ever being created.

[*By the greenhouse path enter two men. One, of middle height, vividly handsome, restless in gesture, of about forty years, is dressed elegantly in riding clothes and carries a short whip. The other, stocky, sun-burned, about fifty, is dressed plainly and smokes a cigar. The older man,*

walking close in front of the younger and unconsciously retarding his steps, is speaking earnestly, in a downright, uneducated manner.]

THE STOCKY MAN

Eighty foot in twelve years! That's what took me, sir. And hard, clean-grained timber. Eighty foot high, two foot diameter, in twelve years!

THE OTHER

[*Politely.*]

Remarkable!

THE STOCKY MAN

And he bred them trees from mean, old walnut stock — trash that wa'n't more'n thirty foot high in a century. He's done it, sir. I've tested the trees. That's why I tell you, Senator Henshawe, he's a practical man.

JULIAN

[*Nodding approval.*]

Undoubtedly, my dear Westgate!

WESTGATE

Oh, I know there's folks call Peter Dale a fool dreamer. He's sunk a fortune breedin' new-fangled flowers, with fancy cologne perfumes. Well, I ain't got no smell. And some folks say his cherries are plums and his plums be peaches. Well, I ain't got no

taste. But I'm a lumberman, and I say he beats the Lord at makin' trees.

JULIAN

[*Trying deftly to pass* WESTGATE *on the path.*]
I must beg your pardon —

WESTGATE

[*Buttonholing him.*]

Oh, no harm intended, Senator. I just talk plain business. I deal in forests. I see the sawmills skinnin' the land's back like a dead squirrel. I skin it myself. It's business.— Now, sir, it's just this: A skinned squirrel don't fetch much for fur; and I tell you the last tip o' the land's tail is in sight. What's the cure? Why, breedin', sir: tree-breedin'; and Peter Dale's the doctor. He's goin' to grow them hills a new hide o' forests before we can tan the old one.

JULIAN

[*Visibly bored, but still affable.*]

Most interesting. But where do I —

WESTGATE

You come in? That's easy! You come in on that Forest Improvement Bill. That proposes for the government to back Peter Dale in his breedin' experiments, and to start other experts along the same trail.

JULIAN

But I thought —

WESTGATE

You thought, maybe, the lumber interests was against it? But we ain't! No, sir: [*With a wink*] we're gettin' put wise. We want to hog the future as much as the present. So go ahead, Senator; go right ahead.

RAEBURN

[*Having spoken aside with* MARK, *approaches.*] And may I add my word, Senator?

JULIAN

[*Turning cordially.*]

Ah, Professor Raeburn! — How are you?

RAEBURN

What applies to flowers and fruits and forest trees, applies even more — does it not? — to men.

JULIAN

I don't quite follow.

RAEBURN

Take our farms and lumber industries — good stock is their foundation: Sound wheat, sound cattle, sound timber — we have learned to breed these better, scientifically.

JULIAN

Very true. Well?

RAEBURN

So with men and women, Americans, our people — breed is the sinew and soul of us: Sound Americans, Senator, better Americans — we must learn to breed them, scientifically.

WESTGATE

[*Winking at* JULIAN.]

Say, he's dotty. I knowed he was a professor.

JULIAN

[*To* RAEBURN.]

You interest me. Does this Eugenics Bill propose that the government shall go into the human live stock improvement business?

RAEBURN

It proposes, sir, that the people shall raise their children as carefully — as their sheep and cattle.

JULIAN

In what way?

RAEBURN

In two ways: By forbidding the production of the worst stock, and by encouraging the production of the best.

JULIAN

And who is to decide what stock is the worst?

RAEBURN

The doctors. There are racial poisons, perfectly well known, which ravage the homes of our people with disease, insanity and crime far more terrible than tuberculosis or the smallpox. The laws of their spreading are understood and preventable.

JULIAN

Indeed!

[*He pauses a moment, playing with his whip.*]

And the best stock: Who understands the laws of breeding the best?

RAEBURN

The biologists — of to-morrow. To-day we stand only at the outer gate, but we have the key which may unlock a vast kingdom of human happiness: the law of Mendel. Our Eugenics Bill provides that the government shall help to conquer that kingdom by three means: investigation, education, legislation.

JULIAN

My dear Professor — [JULIAN *gives a light laugh*] — that Bill may be passed by the Senate of the year 2000, not before.

[*He starts to leave.*]

RAEBURN

Possibly; but I had counted, sir, that you —

JULIAN

Pardon me, please. I have important business, and must get to it.

[*Speaking to* MARK.]

I say — young fellow! Where's Mr. Dale?

MARK

[*With a leisurely glance at* JULIAN, *points off left.*]

Over there. He's busy.

[JULIAN *moves quickly away.* RAEBURN *follows him a few steps.*]

RAEBURN

Senator Henshawe! One section of our Bill will interest you, I'm sure. I understand you are specially interested in the blind.

JULIAN

[*Pausing rigidly, speaks low and constrained.*]

What! — I?

RAEBURN

The section relates to marriages, where the taint which causes so much congenital blindness —

JULIAN

[*Flicking off a cactus flower with his whip.*]

That for your Bill!

[*He goes quickly off, left.*]

RAEBURN

[*Taken aback.*]

Well!

[*He takes off his glasses and dusts them, glancing oddly at* MARK.]

Did you say Senator Henshawe had adopted the little blind girl?

MARK

[*Slowly, returning* RAEBURN'S *look.*]

So they say.

RAEBURN

[*Readjusting his glasses on his nose.*]

Well. I'll wait for Mr. Dale in the house.

[*He starts up the greenhouse path.*]

WESTGATE

Say, Professor! That word's a new one on me.

RAEBURN

What word?

WESTGATE

Eu — genics: What in the land is it?

RAEBURN

It's good breeding — in the land.

[*He goes out, right.*]

WESTGATE

[*Puffing his cigar, stares after him.*]

Biologists — eu — genics — key to the kingdom! Maybe that's the king's English. 'Tain't mine! Seems like that other feller talks a different language.

MARK

Most other fellows do.

[*Sitting on an inverted seed-box in the path,* MARK *is working at the cactus bed.* WESTGATE *saunters over and stands behind him, where he speaks with crisp good-nature to* MARK, *who barely murmurs his replies, being intent on his work.*]

WESTGATE

Governor busy, eh?

MARK

Yes.

WESTGATE

Gettin' ready for his big annual test, ain't he?

MARK

Yes.

WESTGATE

To-morrer, is it?

MARK

Yes.

WESTGATE

Folks say, he raises a million two-year-old fruit trees, picks out the best one to breed by, and burns the rest for rubbish. Say! — One out of a million? Is that straight?

MARK

Yes.

WESTGATE

[*Peering over* MARK's *shoulder.*]

Cactus seedlin's! What are ye — weedin' out the thorny ones?

MARK

That's it.

WESTGATE

Them tall ones, understand they're the thornless variety. Breeds 'em from the thorny kind, does he?

MARK

Yes.

WESTGATE

[*Viewing* MARK's *imperturbable back.*]

Say! Don't want a job as Cook's Guide, do ye? I'll drop round later and inquire.

[WESTGATE *strolls up the greenhouse path, and disappears. Without looking up,* MARK *continues his weeding. Through the greenhouse door,*

MANA DALE *springs into the garden, half running — her arms filled with brilliant chaparral. She is hatless, and sun-browned: a strong girl, in her early twenties, free and joyous in her bearing. She is dressed for horseback. Approaching behind* MARK, *she tosses over him the mass of wild-flowers and grasses.*]

MARK

[*Starting up.*]

Mana!

MANA

Mark! She's an angel — from nose to fetlock!

MARK

[*Quizzically.*]

She is?

MANA

The new filly.

MARK

So you've got a new one?

MANA

You should have seen us riding — riding! Sea, and sand, and sunlight, and miles of golden beach! — The wet sand was a mirror, so upsidedown we went galloping double, on and on, till splash! we broke the mirror into fiery glass — up to our knees in bursting billows of green foam!

MARK

[*Watching her with happy admiration.*]

No!

MANA

Yes! And the silvery sea gulls screamed round our flanks, and the silly flamingoes flapped their rosy wings! — Mark, *can* you imagine it?

MARK

[*With a quiet laugh.*]

Guess I can. So your new horse is a winner. How fast is she?

MANA

As fast — as happiness. I kept a half mile ahead of him.

MARK

Him?

MANA

And he wore spurs, too!

MARK

Who did?

MANA

At last I jumped off and waited for him in the chaparral.— There! I've brought you home an armful of it.

[*Tucking a spray in* MARK'S *shirt.*]

Here's wild verbena.

MARK

[*Thoughtfully.*]

Mana: Who gave you the new filly?

MANA

Julian — Senator Henshawe. She's his finest thoroughbred; and he loves her almost as much as —

MARK

As what?

MANA

Oh, Mark!

[*She seizes up a vermilion plume from the chaparral, and sways it to her gesture.*]

Galloping — galloping! The hard sand under my hoofs, the spray in my nostrils, the salt wind in my lungs, and the hot sunshine!

[*From her outreached hand she flings the plume, and stands with flashing eyes.*]

MARK

You're not yourself, Mana.

MANA

[*Starting.*]

No; I don't seem to be.

MARK

Got a spell on? You were never like this before.

MANA

Wasn't I? What was I — before?

MARK

[*Slow and earnest.*]

See here: I want you to tell me —

MANA

[*With sudden introspection, half fearful, as if checking her thoughts.*]

No; you tell *me,* dear Mark. For I want to hold back and think. Tell me again all that we used to play and plan together.

MARK

We?

MANA

Ever since we were children, in the redwoods — and in college — long ago!

MARK

College was only a year ago.

MANA

[*Absently.*]

Was it? — Tell me.

[*She sits on the box in the path, trying to focus her thoughts.* MARK *looks at her curiously.*]

MARK

What about?

MANA

You know: how we used to play.

[MARK *sits on the ground beside her. She puts one hand amid his tumbled hair. Throughout their scene together, by her instinctive actions and looks, more than by her words, it is evident that she feels for* MARK *deep trust and affection.*]

MARK

I guess your father gave us our notions.

MANA

Dear Father Peter!

MARK

You remember, after he read us "The Descent of Man," he started us off with amœbas and microscopes —

MANA

And starfish in the aquarium; yes!

MARK

[*With a laugh.*]

Then we were promoted to frog's eggs. And when the little tadpoles hatched out —

MANA

[*Smiling.*]

They grew to frog princes!

MARK

Then the bone collections! Godfrey, that queer little prehistoric horse! Its skeleton wasn't bigger than a kitten's.

MANA

Father Peter made a tiny harness for it.

MARK

Queer play for kids, but fun, wasn't it?

MANA

[*Growing pensive again.*]

Playing is lots of fun.

MARK

When I see other kids, Mana, I realize the master raised us different.

MANA

I wonder — did he raise us too different!

MARK

To make good with our great experiment?

MANA

What was it? I half forget.

MARK

Why, getting married.

MANA

[*Closing her eyes.*]

Tell me about that!

MARK

You remember our Utopian colony! We're to go out into the desert in Arizona, with the cactus plants in our schooners, you with your mate and I with mine, and there —

MANA

[*Murmurs.*]

Into the desert!

MARK

And there we're to start the millennium. [*With a smile.*] That's easy. For the master, he's to pick you a husband, and me a wife; and the thornless cactus —

[MANA *touches his arm, as if to interrupt, then speaks low.*]

MANA

Go on.

MARK

That's to reclaim the desert, and be our vine and fig tree. So there we're to teach our children to live simply, and to go on selecting wisely other mates, till maybe the master's dream —

MANA

Oh, it's dreaming of dreams!

MARK

More than likely; but anyhow, there's the cactus — not a thorn on it! Ten years ago, *that* was dreaming of dreams.

MANA

[*Starting up.*]

No, it's no use!

MARK

[*Anxiously.*]

Mana?

MANA

I told you to tell it, but it has no meaning now. Now *I* must tell *you* — ah, real wonders!

MARK

[*Rising slowly.*]

Tell.

MANA

We're to be married!

MARK

[*After a pause, deeply.*]

So.

MANA

Now you know.

MARK

[*Breathing quick.*]

Him? The Senator?

[MANA *nods; then cries out, impetuously.*]

MANA

Mark, dear! — kiss me!

[*She moves toward* MARK, *naïve, confiding. He extends his hand, abrupt, unconsciously holding her off. She takes it, bewildered.*]

MARK

[*Pressing her hand.*]

Now I know.

[*He turns away, dazed by deep emotions of which he is himself unaware. From the path he lifts the iron prong. Bending it slowly in his tightened hands, he flings it heavily from him.*]

MANA

[*Wonderingly.*]

You're not glad that I told you?

MARK

He: When did he —?

MANA

Now: just to-day.

MARK

But you've hardly met. How long since? A fortnight?

MANA

How long? I don't know. I haven't thought. He just happened — like an enchanted knight — out of fairyland.

MARK

Oh, fairyland!

MANA

He just came — and carried me away.

MARK

So you chose him — because he just came?

MANA

[*Puzzled.*]

Chose him? There was no choice. You don't understand.

MARK

[*Painfully.*]

No, so it seems. I don't just size up — enchantment.

MANA

[*Wistfully.*]

You're glad?

MARK

Tell me this: Does the master know?

MANA

Not yet. Julian has gone to tell him.

MARK

Good. *He'll* size it up.

MANA

I wanted to tell you, the first. And now — you dear old Mariposa giant — won't you give me a hug?

MARK

[*Taking her in his arms, kisses her tenderly.*]

Little Mana!

MANA

[*Looking at him affectionately.*]

Always so solid and calm, like a big, strong hill!

MARK

Me?

MANA

[*Listening, like a doctor for a heart-beat.*]

But not in there. You know what's in there?

[MANA *raps his chest with her knuckles. The spray of verbena falls from* MARK's *shirt to the path.*]

MARK

Where?

MANA

[*With a mysterious smile.*]

Inside the hill.

MARK

What?

MANA

Lava — red hot! I can hear it thumping. You know what will happen — some day?

MARK

When?

MANA

When this that's happened to me — happens to you.

MARK

Well, what then?

MANA

The hilltop will burst and blow up, and the lava will rush out and burn things. I wouldn't like to be too near you then.

MARK

[*With a puzzled smile.*]

Wouldn't you?

[*Outside, right, the voice of* ROSALIE *calls:* "Mana! Where are you? Mana!" MANA *listens.*]

MANA

Come! Let's go to the child.

[*Hand in hand,* MANA *and* MARK *go round the greenhouse. From the left, on the middle-ground path, enter* PETER *and* JULIAN. PETER

walks slowly, whittling a piece of bamboo. JULIAN *slackens his pace to* PETER'S, *visibly controlling a restless nervousness.*]

PETER

My daughter. So.

JULIAN

She's a fresh miracle! There's no other like her in the world.

PETER

I believe you there.

JULIAN

Nothing can express, Mr. Dale, how truly I love her.— Nothing!

PETER

Nothing? Too bad!

JULIAN

Except my acts: They shall prove it to you.

PETER

That's better.

JULIAN

If you would only put me to the test!

PETER

Thank you, sir. Believe you're fond of horses.

JULIAN

Very.

PETER

Raise them?

JULIAN

I keep a stud farm.

PETER

Maybe you'd tell me: How do you pick the sires?

JULIAN

By their pedigree. I have them selected by experts, here and abroad.

PETER

Mr. Henshawe: When I was in Egypt, at the tombs of the Pharaohs, I saw there pictures of horses — noble thoroughbreds.

JULIAN

They used selection then, I suppose.

PETER

Ain't it singular?

JULIAN

What?

PETER

How ancient this horse-sense is — for horses.

JULIAN

[*Fidgeting.*]

I believe I was saying.— Your daughter —

PETER

She's a woman, you'd say.

JULIAN

The woman I love. She loves me. I ask to marry her. Will you trust her to me? I have come for your answer.

[*Sitting on the bench,* PETER *goes on whittling for a moment; then he hands to* JULIAN *the piece of bamboo.*]

PETER

There you are.

JULIAN

This!

PETER

It's bamboo. Squint one eye, and look through it with t'other.

JULIAN

[*Starts to do so, but stops, glancing sharply at* PETER.]

I don't understand.

PETER

When I was a child, that would have made a rare toy for me.

[*He reaches for it;* JULIAN *hands it to him.*]

Just see.

[*Looking through it with one eye, he points it upward and about in various directions.*]

My, what a spy-glass! — Little round sky, blue as marble; bright green plums; purple tree tops; brown squirrel, nibbling a cone; gray cat-bird's nest; and yourself, Senator: You might be the Man-in-the-Moon — if I were a child, now.

JULIAN

[*Chafing.*]

If it pleases you to joke —

PETER

[*Quiet and intense.*]

It don't, sir. It hurts me much to remind you that this stick is a wonderful toy to a happy child that can see, but not to little Goldylocks — your child.

JULIAN

[*Starting.*]

What do you mean?

PETER

I mean to put you to the test, sir, as you asked me.

JULIAN

Speak plain, then.

PETER

Need I speak plainer? Rosalie was born blind.

JULIAN

[*Controlling himself.*]

What of that, now, to me?

PETER

Now, and for always — that is my answer.

JULIAN

[*Darkly.*]

You refuse me Mana?

[PETER *resumes his whittling.*]

Because I took pity on a little waif, and adopted her as my child?

PETER

Pity, sir! You should have taken pity — before she was born.

JULIAN

Mr. Dale!

PETER

I have heard, sir, you have three sisters.

JULIAN

You've heard?

PETER

Two of them became blind at birth. The other — has epilepsy.

JULIAN

[*Wincing.*]

Who told you that?

PETER

Need I go on? Your father —

JULIAN

Stop! This is insufferable.

PETER

What, sir? — The truth?

JULIAN

From whom have you heard these things?

PETER

From an old school-fellow of your father's. I've known him since many years: Minister Spofford.

JULIAN

[*Startled.*]

Spofford!

PETER

He thinks the world of Mana; so he came and told me.

JULIAN

[*In lowered voice.*]

My God, did he tell —?

PETER

Everything, Mr. Henshawe: *every thing.*

JULIAN

About the child?

[PETER *nods, whittling.*]

And did he.— And also —

PETER

The mother. Yes.

JULIAN

What right — by God, I say, what right had he to speak, or you to ask? Have you both no honor?

PETER

Senator Henshawe, sir: I have one daughter. If the Angel of Honor should come a-courting her, I would look up his pedigree. The children of Honor don't always take the prize.

JULIAN

But Mana: you haven't told Mana?

PETER

She loves you — I'm afraid.

JULIAN

We love each other, Mr. Dale. You didn't tell her?

PETER

Love's a great thing, Mr. Henshawe: 'most as great as reason.

JULIAN

It would ruin me to her. It would end all. You didn't, Mr. Dale, for God's sake, you didn't?

PETER

Not for God's sake, sir, but for yours. I thought —

JULIAN

[*With a moan of relief.*]

Ah, thanks for that!

PETER

— I thought you loved her.

JULIAN

You know that.

PETER

I still hope it.

JULIAN

Can't you see how you've tortured me?

PETER

[*Putting his hand on* JULIAN's *shoulder.*]

I should have seen it all sooner, my dear boy — poor boy! But I was so busy with these other children [*He indicates the flowers*], I just didn't see. I'm sorry.

[*He turns away.*]

My little, poor Mana!

JULIAN

But you see now — don't you? — she must never know. She must never be tortured as I have been. She is too young, too joyous. Besides, she's a girl: Such thoughts are not for girls.

PETER

[*Darting a keen glance.*]

Not, eh? That's queer! — How long have you known Mana?

JULIAN

Less than a month, in time; a thousand years — in love. Love justifies all things.

PETER

"Love suffereth all, and is kind."

JULIAN

She shall not suffer, by heaven!

PETER

She must, sir. She loves too well: yes, even the little child.

JULIAN

[*With a faint show of cheerfulness.*]

Oh, well, as for the child — the lightning, you know, never strikes twice. The chances are all to the good.

PETER

Chances!

[*He flushes, with contracting brows.*]

JULIAN

I tell you, I've consulted a specialist, and he assures me the chances are one in a thousand —

PETER

[*With a terrible look.*]

Mr. Henshawe!

JULIAN

[*Stiffening.*]

Sir!

[*Clutching the bamboo in both hands,* PETER *looks hard at it, controlling himself. Then, putting it slowly in his pocket, he points right.*]

PETER

That way 's to the road.

JULIAN

Indeed! So I misunderstood?

[*Moving a few steps, he pauses.*]

Won't you give me one chance?

PETER

One chance — to poison?

JULIAN

I love her. Won't you listen —?

[*He follows* PETER, *and cries out.*]

— You won't tell her?

PETER

[*With deliberation.*]

I'll give you this afternoon — to tell her yourself. That's fair.

[PETER *turns up the central path. After a moment,* JULIAN *goes right, pausing by the greenhouse door.*]

JULIAN

Mr. Dale: Will you leave the decision to her?

PETER

You and I, sir, have nothing to do with it.

[JULIAN *goes into the greenhouse.* PETER *goes slowly left, along the middleground path. On the same path, right,* MANA *enters. Seeing* PETER, *her face lights up, and she approaches softly behind him.*]

MANA

Thinking?

PETER

[*Turning toward her.*]

My girl!

[*He goes to her and takes her extended hands.*]

MANA

[*With eager happiness.*]

Well?

PETER

[*Looking deep in her eyes.*]

It's all well — there.

MANA

Where?

PETER

My girl has clear eyes. It will be as she sees it.

MANA

What's the matter? Hasn't he told you?

PETER

He's going to tell *you.*

MANA

[*Quickly.*]

Is he ill? What has happened?

PETER

Nothing, child. It won't happen.

MANA

I don't understand. You're unhappy?

[*Slowly, her face clouding deeply.*]

And I thought — why, I thought — It's all strange, like a dream!

PETER

It will be — to-morrow.

[*He turns away.* MANA's *face suddenly lights again. She goes to him fondly.*]

MANA

Oh, my dear, forgive me! I see now. It's *you.* You're afraid you'll lose me? What a notion! Of course it won't happen. [*Smiling.*] I'll never go back on my Daddy!

PETER

I know that.

MANA

Then why do you gaze at me so?

PETER

Child, look round us!

[*He puts one arm about her, and points to the garden.*]

Here we are, home folks, all together. Quite a family!

MANA

Dear flowers!

PETER

There they are, toeing the line — stubborn little upstarts, growing up smart, all bowing "Hello!" to their step-dad, Peter Dale.

MANA

They don't look afraid of him.

PETER

Oh, at first, they all wanted to go their own ways; but they've had to mind their pistils and quintines, I tell you. When they were babies, I've bottled 'em, and weaned 'em, and boxed 'em, and put 'em to bed, and tucked up their tendrils. And when they grew bigger and put on their petals, I've picked out their wardrobes and done their courting and wedding for 'em. You might say, I'm kind o' nurse, priest and selectman combined.

MANA

You're their dear old Father Nature — that's what you are.

PETER

No, I'm plain a gardener, learning how, and trying to teach my family. Only here I've raised millions of step-flowers, but just one flower: that's Mana.

MANA

[*Kissing him.*]

Dear Dad!

PETER

Just so: just your old useless Dad. For you see, I can garden Mother Nature's childer, but not my own.

MANA

You've brought us all up together. Have I turned out such a naughty-flower-girl?

PETER

[*Pinching her cheek.*]

Well, kind of a "sport," I'm glad to say. But 'tain't what you are; it's what I can't do for you, that bothers me — when I think of *them.*

[*Looking at the flowers, he bends over the one with the white string.*]

Look here!

MANA

Why, it's the blue poppy — blossomed!

PETER

Yes, it's blue. I made it so, and I can keep it so — for a hundred generations: true blue. Like you, girl.

MANA

[*Smiling.*]

True blue, Dad?

PETER

But see now! To keep it true, I can give this poppy two things: environment and selection. But you — I can give you only the first.

MANA

You mean, with selection, it's I that —

PETER

I mean that when my flower-girl comes to the blossoming, she becomes a woman; and woman is herself garden and gardener, and the flowers of God are in her keeping.

MANA

But Dad, dear, you've taught me *that* always. Why do you remind me?

PETER

Poppies need a lot of reminding. It's in their sap to hark 'way back to the old times: to dream — and forget to-morrow. And as for girls — There! I'm forgetting my fruit trees!

[*He starts away.*]

MANA

But Dad — You haven't told me what Julian said.

PETER

Oh, something for you to decide.

MANA

For him?

PETER

For you both.

MANA

But can I?

PETER

Nobody else can.

MANA

Is it hard?

PETER

You won't take long about it.

MANA

But tell me —

PETER

He'll tell you.

[*Pausing, he watches something in the air; then catches it quickly with his hand, murmuring to himself:*]

Look at that now!

MANA

[*Coming near.*]

What?

PETER

[*Opens his hand, revealing a white, downy filament.*]

These wild things will blow into the garden.

MANA

A milk-weed seed?

PETER

No; a nettle.

[*He puts it in his pocket, murmuring aloud:*]

To-day the seed of Man blows on the wind, but to-morrow — Mana! The Senator's coming back soon. I leave you in charge of the garden.

[*He goes out, left.* MANA *comes slowly down to the pool, sees the starfish, looks down at it pensively, touching it with her foot, and reaching upward her arms in unconscious longing. From the right* ROSALIE *enters, with flowers. She comes toward the pool, humming low. Hearing her,* MANA *turns.*]

ROSALIE

Jack and Jill
Went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water;
Jack fell down
And broke his crown —

MANA

[*Running to meet her.*]

And Jill came tumbling after!

[*Laughing, she lifts* ROSALIE'S *face, kissing it; then leads her to the bench.*]

ROSALIE

Hello, Mana!

MANA

What's my Rosalie got here?

ROSALIE

Wildflowers.

MANA

Where did you get them?

ROSALIE

Mr. Spofford fetched 'em to me. He sent 'way up to the mountains for 'em, 'cause I like wild flowers better than tame ones.

MANA

Why?

ROSALIE

'Cause they don't smell so noisy.

MANA

Noisy! Why, how do wild ones smell?

ROSALIE

Like bells far away. But these here in the garden, they're loud as trumpets — noontimes, when the sun's hot. What kind are these?

MANA

Let me see.

[*Sorting them.*]

Here's lupines, anemones, columbines, wild-poppies, Cassiopes — oh, lovely ones: just like those Mark and I used to pick in the mountains: blue, white, yellow, red, purple!

ROSALIE

What's purple?

MANA

This — Cassiope.

ROSALIE

I mean — *you* know: What's purple hisself?

MANA

Oh!

[*Looking in the child's sightless eyes,* MANA *hesitates and her face quivers. Bending down, she kisses her.*]

You darling!

[*Then, assuming a quaint cheerfulness, she speaks, confidentially.*]

Purple's a prince, grand and proud!

ROSALIE

What's yellow?

MANA

Yellow's a dancing fairy.

ROSALIE

What's red?

MANA

Red's a laughing little devil.

ROSALIE

What's blue?

MANA

Blue? Blue's a soft, shy bird.

ROSALIE

I like you, Mana. You know things. Other folks are stupid.

MANA

Oh, not Uncle Julian. He knows things.

ROSALIE

Not flowers. He hates flowers.

MANA

Hates flowers?

ROSALIE

'Cause Father Peter makes new ones. He said so just now to Mr. Spofford.

MANA

Is Uncle Julian with Mr. Spofford now?

ROSALIE

He's talking with him on the piazza. They whispered, but I heard 'em.

MANA

Talking about flowers?

ROSALIE

'Bout flowers and newspapers and you and my Mama.

MANA

[*After a slight pause.*]

Your Mama, Rosalie?

ROSALIE

Yes; she died, I guess. Is *gitimate* died?

MANA

Gitimate? — I don't think so.

ROSALIE

Well, Uncle Julian felt bad, anyway. And he told Mr. Spofford not to tell.

MANA

[*Slowly.*]

Not to tell.

ROSALIE

And then I came away to find my starfish.

MANA

[*Picking it up, gives it to her.*]

Here it is.

ROSALIE

Thank you. And I remembered its song: the one you teached me.

MANA

[*Kneeling down beside her.*]

Yes?

ROSALIE

"With my fingers in the dark
I can feel —"

Mana, what's the dark?

MANA

It's — it's —

[JULIAN *enters from the greenhouse. Not yet seeing him,* MANA *puts her arms around the child and speaks low.*]

— It's a secret, dear.

JULIAN

[*Tensely, coming forward.*]

What's a secret?

MANA

[*Springing up at his voice.*]

Ah, Julian!

JULIAN

Are you keeping something from me, Mana? What's the child been prattling?

MANA

She and I have been chattering about wildflowers and you.

JULIAN

[*Starting.*]

About me? So the secret's about me?

[*Glancing at* ROSALIE, MANA *motions silence to him, and draws him away. Outside, right, an automobile horn is heard.*]

ROSALIE

Uncle Julian!

JULIAN

[*Gently.*]

Well, Pixy?

ROSALIE

You've forgot something to-day.

JULIAN

Have I? What?

ROSALIE

To kiss me.

JULIAN

[*Coming to her.*]

Now I'm ashamed.

[*He lifts her and kisses her fondly.*]

ROSALIE

[*As he puts her down.*]

It's the third time. That's pretty bad.

JULIAN

[*Smiling.*]

What *shall* I do to make up?

ROSALIE

Ask Mana. *She* knows things.

[ROSALIE *turns away to the bench, fingering her wild-flowers, which she smells of, one by one.*]

JULIAN

[*As if playfully, to* MANA.]

Do you know things?

MANA

[*Gently, looking in his face.*]

Do *you?*

JULIAN

[*Clouding.*]

Why do you ask?

MANA

Dear, you're worried.

JULIAN

I have something to tell you.

MANA

Father Peter said so.

JULIAN

[*Quickly.*]

So you've seen your father? Just now?

MANA

A minute ago.

JULIAN

[*Controlling emotion.*]

Well — Well, and what did he say about me?

MANA

Why, nothing. What did he say to you, when you told him?

JULIAN

He said — He said that —

ROSALIE

[*Calling, and holding out a flower.*]

Oh, smell of this one!

JULIAN

[*Glancing toward the child, speaks to* MANA.]

Dearest, get your hat. We'll go for a ride again, shall we?

MANA

Do you think you can catch me this time?

JULIAN

If I don't, I'll die in the saddle! Come; I'll show you that little bungalow in the cypresses. Run in and get your hat. I'll have the horses ready.

ROSALIE

[*Coming toward them.*]

Oh, go in the carriage, and take me!

JULIAN

Not to-day, Pixy.

[*He stoops to lift a spray of verbena from the path.*]

ROSALIE

[*Pouting.*]

Deary me!

[MANA *starts to go out. In front of her,* JULIAN *holds out the spray of verbena. With a brilliant smile, he looks in her eyes.*]

JULIAN

I've found a memento. You brought this back from our ride?

MANA

An armful.

JULIAN

For me? That was dear of you. May I wear it?

[*He reaches for her hand.*]

Won't you do me the honor —?

[*Offering the spray for her to put in his coat, he is about to kiss her.*]

MANA

[*Drawing shyly away, waves to him, with a smile.*]

In two minutes!

[*She goes off, round the greenhouse.* JULIAN *stands looking after her. Outside the click of the gate is heard.*]

ROSALIE

Uncle Julian!

[JULIAN *closes his eyes, as in sudden pain. Holding in one hand her starfish,* ROSALIE *gropes with the other and twitches his coat.*]

Uncle Julian! What's *gitimate?*

JULIAN

[*Turning quickly.*]

Hush, Rosalie. Come into the house.

[*He leads her by the hand into the greenhouse. Outside, is heard the querulous, slightly husky voice of a woman, calling:* "Ignatius! Ignatius!" *Soon after, on the greenhouse path,* MRS. HENSHAWE *enters. She is a woman past sixty, of handsome features, penetrating eyes and forceful presence, but dowdy in dress, and fidgety in her slow movements. Her outward appearance conveys a crass contrast of qualities. She wears a dull-colored gown, beneath a duster of ample dimensions. On her head is an ultra-fashionable hat, swathed in a light-green automobile veil, and in her white-gloved hand is a purple parasol. Close behind her follows a small, trig, business-like woman of about thirty,*

with twinkling eyes: MISS WINCH. *She also is dressed for automobiling, but in plain, practical garb. In her hands she holds a small camera, which she is focusing upon* MRS. HENSHAWE.]

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Muttering audibly.*]

Men! These men! Did he expect me to wait for him in the motor!

MISS WINCH

[*Cheerily.*]

More in the sun, please!

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Turning portentously to stare at her.*]

Now, what are you snapshotting there?

MISS WINCH

[*Clicking her kodak.*]

The Honorable Mrs. Henshawe, President of the Social Topics Society, bestowing her congratulations on the daughter of the Wizard Plant Breeder — Miss Mana Dale, engaged to her son, the Senator. Front page! Portrait by Winch, Special Artist of "The Live Rail!"

[*She laughs pleasantly.*]

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Gasping.*]

Well, of all —!

[*She sinks into a garden chair, near the greenhouse.* MISS WINCH, *tucking the kodak under her arm, takes a small pad from her hat, and a pencil from her glove.*]

MISS WINCH

Seen the announcement in this morning's edition?

[MRS. HENSHAWE *moves the open parasol between them, raises her voice, and calls:*]

MRS. HENSHAWE

Ignatius!

[*Muttering again.*]

My stars, these clergymen! They're worse than women: dawdling, dawdling!

MISS WINCH

[*Writing on her pad.*]

Rev. Mr. Spofford, in Mrs. Henshawe's car, hastens to join in congratulations.

[*Peering round the parasol.*]

Is that correct?

[*Closing the parasol,* MRS. HENSHAWE *looks at her with dumb reproof.* MISS WINCH *bites her lip.*]

It *is* detestable, ma'am, but it's my job.— Salary and city editor's orders! You'll forgive me?

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Rising.*]

Well, young person, all the world, I suppose, must earn its living — nowadays. But I was born before your time.

[*Crossing to the bench, she calls again:*]

Ignatius!

MISS WINCH

[*Following her.*]

Report of engagement absolutely false: Is that what you wish to say?

MRS. HENSHAWE

I wish to say *nothing* — if you'll let me. My son told me explicitly to say nothing — before this evening.

MISS WINCH

All the world is so interested in your son.

MRS. HENSHAWE

Now, if only it were somebody else's son! If there is one gift from God, it's a little gossip about somebody else's children. But to bottle up one's own business in one's own mouth — it's enough to make the cork fly in the Devil's face!

MISS WINCH

First met her in the Blind Asylum, we understand.

[MRS. HENSHAWE *turns to speak, but closes her lips again grimly.*]

So attached to the child!

MRS. HENSHAWE

Julian's a fool. I told him so. He would insist on adopting the poor thing.

MISS WINCH

So romantic!

MRS. HENSHAWE

Oh, he's romantic, when it comes to women. He fairly magnetizes 'em. *Fee-faw-fum, fair ladies!* They can't resist him. Just like his father.

MISS WINCH

Inherited!

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Rising, flustered.*]

I never said so.

MISS WINCH

Sorry, ma'am.

[*Enter, right, on the middleground path,* RAEBURN *and* MARK. MARK *is pushing a wheelbarrow, with a shovel in it. They stop by the cactus bed.*]

MARK

[*Earnestly, to* RAEBURN.]

You say it sometimes skips a generation?

RAEBURN

Sometimes — but seldom.

MISS WINCH

[*Glancing toward the men, speaks to* MRS. HENSHAWE.]

Belong here?

[*From the greenhouse,* MANA *enters. She wears a felt hat and carries a short whip. Seeing* MRS. HENSHAWE, *she comes forward graciously.*]

MANA

Dear Mrs. Henshawe!

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*With open arms.*]

Sweet child! My pretty Mana! Well, well, well!

[*She embraces* MANA, *with cordial ejaculations, while* MISS WINCH, *at one side, points the camera.* RAEBURN, *indicating the three women, speaks to* MARK.]

RAEBURN

There are the Three Fates, Freeman: Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow!

MARK

[*Glancing.*]

All women.

[*He begins to shovel the weeded cacti into his wheelbarrow. Leaving him,* RAEBURN *passes along the middleground path and goes out, left.*]

MANA

[*To* MRS. HENSHAWE.]

When did you come? Has Julian told —

[*Catching sight of* MISS WINCH, *who clicks the camera,* MANA *checks herself, and bows slightly.*]

Oh! I beg your pardon.

MISS WINCH

That's funny. They usually tell me to do that. But — but I do beg *your* pardon, Miss Dale. You see, it's bread and butter; and in my business, there's no butter in good manners. You *do* understand?

MANA

[*With a smile.*]

Why, certainly.

MISS WINCH

That's nice of you. Good day!

[*She goes off by the greenhouse path.*]

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Starting after her.*]

Phenomenal!

[*Then turning, with a wreath of smiles, to* MANA.]

And now, you sweet, sweet thing, tell me all about it!

MANA

[*Simply.*]

Really, there's nothing to tell. It's all just — just feeling.

MRS. HENSHAWE

Yes, yes, of course. Don't *I* know? First love, and first kisses and full moons!

MANA

[*With increasing reserve.*]

Please, Mrs. Henshawe!

MRS. HENSHAWE

If there *is* one gift from heaven that I've made my specialty, it's the first love of two unspoiled hearts that beat as one. You might say, I've devoted my life to it, my dear. Sympathy: sympathy with young souls — and a little chat about it! Oh, that's why I never grow old. They may call it a cruel world, a sinful world, my dear; but "Love among the Ruins": it's still "Love among the Ruins" for me!

MANA

[*Uneasily.*]

Have you seen Julian?

MRS. HENSHAWE

Ah, the Benedick, the Benedick! There's a romantic boy! He was born to be a lover, my dear, and a poet; but they dragged him into politics; and to be sure, there's some money in it. But to think it should be *you* to steal his old bachelor heart at last! — How did you wheedle him? Thirty-six! That's a stubborn age — for marriage. "Who's Who" puts him down *forty*, but shouldn't *I* know! Thirty-seven his next birthday. And you, my love: twenty-five? twenty-four?

MANA

[*Retreating.*]

Twenty-four. I think I must go and find him. He said — if you will excuse —

MRS. HENSHAWE

Will I? *Will* I? Don't *I* know! Heart to heart, wing and wing, wireless messages, magnets — magnets! Tell Julian —

[*She pauses in consternation.* MANA, *going out, right, has smiled and tossed a kiss to* MARK *in the background. Beholding it,* MRS. HENSHAWE *stands open-mouthed.*]

Highty-tighty! Lignum vitæ! So — so!

[*Sitting on the bench, she leans sidewise and squints at* MARK, *who is at work. Then, opening and raising her parasol, she rises and walks toward him, up the central path. Here she hems in her throat, and speaks with distinct affability.*]

Beautiful flowers!

[*At her voice,* MARK *drops his wheelbarrow precipitately and moves off.*]

MARK

Fine!

[*He goes out, left.* MRS. HENSHAWE *follows as far as the cross path and peers after him. Enter, from the greenhouse,* JULIAN *and a plump, elderly, clerical gentleman, earnest and urbane:* MR. SPOFFORD.]

SPOFFORD

No, Julian. It's against my conscience. You have suffered, and caused suffering, too much by ignoring the sanctity of social usages. I cannot permit you to err a second time, without protest.

JULIAN

But there's to be no ignoring of social usages. I'm going to —

SPOFFORD

Not to mention, I say, something else — which cannot be mentioned. You must remember, I have known Mana also since childhood. The happiness of you both is equally dear to me.

JULIAN

Well, then, if you really care for our happiness, you will not interfere now.

SPOFFORD

But this announcement of your engagement in the newspapers. When are you going to deny it?

JULIAN

I'm not going to deny it. I've told you: there's no danger whatever.

SPOFFORD

Julian! After your talk with Mr. Dale —

JULIAN

What right had you to speak to him! It was dishonorable — damnable! As for my marriage — that's not your gamble.

SPOFFORD

[*Starting back.*]

Gamble! How dare —

JULIAN

I repeat! This is a matter which concerns only Mana and me. Mr. Dale saw the justice of that. He has left the decision to Mana.

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Approaching from the middleground.*]

Men, men! Always wrangling — never reasoning! What's the discussion? Now, now, Julian dearest: [*Offering her cheek*] A kiss for your mother?

JULIAN

[*Pacing to and fro.*]

Good-morning, Mother; good-morning!

MRS. HENSHAWE

Not at all; it's afternoon. And no kisses? — Reserved, I suppose, for others — not mothers! Now, now, Ignatius!

[SPOFFORD *starts uneasily.*]

No, not a kiss: an apology!

SPOFFORD

From me?

MRS. HENSHAWE

How much longer, Ignatius, how much longer — must I sit in the motor?

SPOFFORD

My dear Sally —

JULIAN

Why did you bring him now, Mother?

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Bristling.*]

I? I didn't: he *came!* He said he wanted to speak with you about your engagement.

JULIAN

[*Morosely.*]

He wants me to break it.

MRS. HENSHAWE

Break what?

JULIAN

Break my oath, and my honor, and Mana's heart, and my own! Do you wish this too, Mother? Do *you* wish it — for the sanctity of social usages?

SPOFFORD

Of course she wishes it.

MRS. HENSHAWE

My dear boy — it's all one to me!

JULIAN

All one!

MRS. HENSHAWE

I'm a great believer in social usages, if that's what you mean. And I never let my heart-breaks stand

in the way of my happiness. But, of course, you must judge for yourself.— What's her income?

JULIAN

[*Turning away, bitterly.*]

Mother!

SPOFFORD

[*With reproof.*]

Sally!

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Glancing toward the cactus bed.*]

Judging by *looks*, it wouldn't half fill a wheelbarrow.— You blessed child!

[*With effusion she greets* MANA, *who enters from the greenhouse.*]

SPOFFORD

[*Also greeting her.*]

Well, well!

MANA

Dear Uncle Spofford — halloa!

SPOFFORD

[*Kissing her hand.*]

Always lovelier, I declare!

JULIAN

[*With repressed excitement.*]

Mana! — The horses are ready.

MANA

So am I. I've been hunting for you.

JULIAN

Come.

[*He takes her riding whip, and starts to go, right. In the left middleground,* MARK *reënters.*]

SPOFFORD

[*Uneasily.*]

Wait. Julian has something to tell you.

MANA

[*Quietly.*]

I know.

SPOFFORD

You know — what it's about?

JULIAN

[*To* SPOFFORD.]

Stop!

[*To* MANA.]

Come!

SPOFFORD

[*With excitement.*]

It's about the child.

[MRS. HENSHAWE *gasps, and hurries, gesticulating, to* SPOFFORD.]

MANA

[*To* JULIAN.]

Rosalie?

JULIAN

Yes. Will you come? We'll discuss it.

SPOFFORD

Wait! — Children, my conscience will not permit you to go yet. As your oldest friend, I claim the right to discuss this with you now — before you do anything rash.

MANA

Rash, Uncle Spofford?

JULIAN

Mana, do you wish *me* to tell you, or him?

[*He is drawing her away. They are entering the greenhouse.* SPOFFORD *puts aside* MRS. HENSHAWE, *who is trying to whisper to him, and speaks with perturbed command.*]

SPOFFORD

The child, I say,— Julian, speak now and here! Or shall I?

JULIAN

[*With sudden coolness.*]

I will.

[*With set face he returns. After a pause, he speaks huskily.*]

Mana, the child is mine.

MANA

[*Very low.*]

The child.

JULIAN

My own — illegitimate. Now I have told you.

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*With ineffectual gestures.*]

My God!

JULIAN

This clergyman, with his conscience, has forced me to tell you like this — brutally, inhumanly.—

[*With supplication.*]

— Mana, my dear!

MANA

[*Very gently.*]

She told me.

JULIAN

[*Awe-struck.*]

She? — Rosalie?

MANA

That she died — and you loved her —

JULIAN

Yes, it is true. And I am not ashamed. [*Looking at* SPOFFORD.] But *he* is — our friend — he *is* ashamed. He tells me that because of the child, whom I love, and whose mother I loved, I have no right to you — that I must give you up!

SPOFFORD

[*To* MANA.]

My dear, don't you see, it would surely come out in the end; it would all be discovered.

MANA

Discovered?

SPOFFORD

The whole scandal.

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Sinking on to the bench, in tears.*]

Men, men!

MANA

Discovered? That he raised the child, you mean? and adopted and cared for it, instead of casting it adrift on the world — like so many little ones — to struggle for life and love?

SPOFFORD

[*Embarrassed.*]

You see — there are — are complications; and be-

ing a public man, it could never be concealed. Dear girl, now you can see why my conscience forbade —

JULIAN

Mana! Does *your* conscience forbid?

MANA

I'm afraid I don't know. I've never discovered my conscience. I've only just discovered my heart.

JULIAN

[*Springing to her side.*]

Ah! Then you've decided?

MANA

Father Peter said it wouldn't take me long.— Are the horses saddled?

JULIAN

[*Going with her.*]

Mana, my dear love!

[*They go out. As they go,* MARK — *from the middleground — comes slowly forward.*]

SPOFFORD

[*Intensely.*]

Sally! They're gone! What shall we do?

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Rising, in great agitation.*]

Let them go!

SPOFFORD

But the blindness — the cause.— Great heaven! He didn't tell her the worst. He omitted to mention —

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Shrilly.*]

Stop it! If you mention anything else, I'll have hysterics!

[*She hurries off, along the greenhouse path.* SPOFFORD *starts to follow her. As he passes the central path,* MARK *steps abruptly in his way.*]

SPOFFORD

[*Trying to pass.*]

I beg your pardon —

MARK

[*Tensely.*]

What was it he omitted to mention? Tell me.

SPOFFORD

On my word! Who are you? A gardener?

MARK

Yes. Tell me.

SPOFFORD

[*Avoiding* MARK's *eye.*]

Is anything wrong in the garden?

MARK

So it seems. [*With quiet menace.*] Tell me!

SPOFFORD

Insolence! What do you want?

MARK

[*Slowly.*]

I want you to tell me.

SPOFFORD

Let me pass. Are you mad?

MARK

[*Breathing hard.*]

If you don't tell me — I think I will kill you.

SPOFFORD

[*Looks in* MARK's *quivering face.*]

Young man — If you are really — Well, then — Don't speak it aloud!

[*He whispers an instant to* MARK, *whose flushed face sets pale and hard.*]

MARK

So!

SPOFFORD

[*Hurrying past him up the path, glances backward in fear.*]

God-a-mercy!

[*He disappears. The gate clicks.* MARK *stands with closed eyes and clenched hands. Outside, right, the clatter of horses' hoofs sounds harsh on the stone court, then muffled on the roadway. Meantime, in the left middleground,* PETER DALE *enters quietly. Hearing the hoofs,* MARK *starts, and runs up the central path, meeting* PETER. *There, clutching* PETER'S *arm, he points along the row of eucalyptus trees, staring. The sound of galloping grows fainter in the distance.*

CURTAIN.

ACT SECOND

ACT SECOND

Among the cypresses on the California coast. A cliff, overlooking the sea. The scene is sparsely overshadowed by somber wraiths of trees: writhing boughs and contorted skeleton trunks, twisted slantwise from the shore, from which the stricken grove seems to be fleeing in rooted frenzy. Through the dun-green foliage and stark gray silhouettes, the setting sun reddens the purple Pacific between fog-banks. On the left, a jutting elevation of the cliff rises above the scene's level, and scrambles in sharp, rocky heaps beyond sight, leaving a rough-sided stone niche, on the ground level, shut off from the sea and the winds. By this stands a boulder; near-by, lies the log of a fallen tree. On the right, clutched and half concealed by the cypresses, the porch and squat roof of a small bungalow blend with the surroundings.

From the left enters a woman, wearing a gray automobile veil. She is followed, with quick steps, by a man dressed in a chauffeur's uniform. The

woman looks about her furtively; goes to the porch and tries the door; then peers through a slit in the shade-drawn window. The woman is MISS WINCH.

MISS WINCH

Have they tied their horses yet?

THE CHAUFFEUR

Just hitched 'em yonder in the lean-to. Coming this way.

MISS WINCH

[*Points off right.*]

How near to the shore is the main road — that way?

CHAUFFEUR

'Bout a quarter mile. Turns a loop there into the tall pine.

MISS WINCH

Go back to the auto and wait. When you hear me whistle — this —

[*She blows softly a little whistle attached to her watch chain.*]

— blow your motor horn in answer, and take the car round to the loop. I'll join you there. We'll attend to those other assignments later.

CHAUFFEUR

O. K.

[*He goes out. The woman stands a moment, looking off left; then she moves quickly toward the bungalow, and disappears behind it. Enter, left,* MANA *and* JULIAN. MANA'S *face is vaguely troubled. She walks close to* JULIAN, *who appears rather to lead than to accompany her. Restively she turns her head, glancing from tree to tree.*]

JULIAN

We're almost there.— What's the matter?

MANA

[*In a low voice.*]

They seem half human.

JULIAN

Are you afraid, dear?

MANA

Alive in death — like ghosts.

JULIAN

What are you talking about?

[MANA *points — with a gesture at once fascinated and repelled — toward the trees.*]

— The cypresses?

MANA

I've never been among them before. I never dared.

JULIAN

[*With a laugh.*]

Silly child! Afraid of cypress trees?

MANA

Often I've ridden past them on the bright road. But I always galloped by. They seemed like things in a nightmare — reaching long arms, and trying to scream, but dumb.— Do you think they suffer?

JULIAN

What nonsense!

MANA

Julian, don't you see: they're trying to escape from something; they stare always backward in terror. Even the dead ones struggle.

JULIAN

Naturally; they've fought the sea-winds for a thousand years.

MANA

Fought for life for a thousand years!

JULIAN

That's what makes them so picturesque.

MANA

Always to be rooted where their seeds fell — in the bitterness of the wind — just to cling to life!

JULIAN

The survival of the fittest, my dear!

MANA

Where the fittest are the saddest.

JULIAN

[*Taking her arm, leads her nearer the bungalow.*]

Come, come; my garden girl must learn to love these wild things. These stunted, storm-beaten shapes are romantic, beautiful in their grimness.

MANA

May be so. But always I have loved to see things of joy, not sorrow.

JULIAN

Why then, forget them. Look there!

[*He points; she gazes a moment, without speaking. He shows his disappointment.*]

— Well?

MANA

[*Murmurs.*]

Your bungalow?

JULIAN

[*Softly.*]

Ours.

MANA

[*With sinking voice.*]

How gray it is, and still!

JULIAN

You're tired, dear.

[*Going to the porch, he unlocks the door.*]

Come in. The sun has set.

MANA

[*Looking back at the cypresses.*]

For a thousand years!

[*They go within and disappear. After a brief pause,* MARK *enters from the left. He is heated with riding, and covered with dust. Going hastily toward the bungalow, he pauses near the door, gazing in. Slowly then he moves off, right, and disappears among the trees, as* JULIAN *and* MANA *come out again.*]

JULIAN

And what do you say to our bungalow?

MANA

You built it?

JULIAN

Every rafter and shingle — with dreams of you.

MANA

It looks as if it had *grown* here, ages ago. Have you dreamed of me for so long?

JULIAN

[*With embarrassment.*]

Why,—Why, of course — ages!

[MANA *steals away from the house. He follows anxiously.*]

Mana, what is it?

MANA

It reminds me of something.

JULIAN

Of what?

MANA

When I was a child — a picture in Grimm's Fairy Tales: a little house in the woods. It used to scare me. Underneath it was written:

"Deep in the twilight wood was a robber's hut."

JULIAN

[*Playfully assuming a terrible aspect.*]

Aha! Behold the robber!

[*Laughing, he seizes her.*]

Yield, captive princess!

MANA

[*Draws away fearfully.*]

Don't kiss me — here.

JULIAN

[*Discomfited.*]

And why not here?

MANA

I don't know. Maybe we have no right to bring happiness here.

[*Gazing about her.*]

Somehow they seem to watch us, with sad eyes.

JULIAN

[*Growing gloomy.*]

I'm afraid it's not just the trees.

MANA

[*Moving farther away.*]

You, too, are strange — here.

JULIAN

Tell me: Are you thinking — about the child?

MANA

[*Pensively.*]

We must love her very much, mustn't we? It is terrible to be blind.— How long has she been so?

JULIAN

I feared you were brooding on that. Do you think the worse of me?

MANA

Worse? No, dear Julian; only differently.—You've always cared for her?

JULIAN

Always.

MANA

Then why —?

[*She pauses.*]

JULIAN

[*Uneasily.*]

Well?

MANA

Why haven't you told her?

JULIAN

[*Startled.*]

Told *her!* — Rosalie?

MANA

Daddy is so much dearer than *uncle: Uncle Julian.*

JULIAN

[*Looking at the ground and shifting his feet.*]

Oh, *that* you mean!

[*He is silent for a moment; then glancing up, he is about to speak, when* MANA *continues pensively.*]

MANA

Always it's been a dear name to me — at home in the garden.

JULIAN

[*Nervously.*]

Mana —

MANA

Do you know, I believe, before you came,— my garden was the world, and Father Peter was God.

JULIAN

Do you mean that I crawled like Old Nick into your Eden?

MANA

Don't tease. No, but he always taught me to think, and just to think was happiness: to study flowers and stars and fruit trees; to train wild plants to be thoroughbred; to know the rising of the Dipper and the constellations. It was all fun — but so quiet. Till one day came a great rumbling. I looked over the garden fence, and there through the dust came a strange knight riding, and I thought — like poor Henny Penny — surely the sky is falling!

JULIAN

[*With a smile.*]

A knight! Bless me, who was he?

MANA

Ah, Julian the Enchanter! since that day, my lord, I have been under your spell: my garden has been shaken with strange thunder, my sky has fallen, and my thoughts are full of wild feeling. Oh, what are you? What is this place? Are we real, or only a dream?

JULIAN

[*Passionately.*]

What does it matter? We are together. You are mine.

MANA

Hardly I seem to know myself.

[*She sits on the fallen log.*]

JULIAN

Mine! You are mine now alone. I claim all of you now.

MANA

[*Simply.*]

You have no need. No, Julian; I have forgotten too much to need reminding why. Even at this moment Father Peter is waiting, wondering, watching the road, listening for the sound of horses. And

Mark —[*She smiles, with affectionate, reminiscent look*] great, slow, quiet Mark — he has dropped his garden tools, and stands listening also, waiting to wish me good-night.

JULIAN

[*Mutters low.*]

His garden tools!

MANA

[*Oblivious.*]

They are far away, that always have been near me.

JULIAN

[*In a flat voice.*]

Mark: you've never told me about him.

MANA

[*Starting from her thoughts.*]

About Mark? Why, there's nothing to tell about Mark. He's just my Adam's rib. I came out of his marrow, like Eve, to ask all the questions and do all the mischief. Or you might call him a shaggy old tree-trunk, and me the hamadryad.

JULIAN

[*Sitting beside her, looks close in her face.*]

And where does Apollo come in?

MANA

[*Smiling faintly.*]

Oh, he comes — in time, doesn't he?

JULIAN

[*Fervently.*]

How I love you!

MANA

Wait: let us think.

JULIAN

No, let us love.

MANA

To think is sweet when we love.

JULIAN

But now, now, Mana, you — you here in the night, speaking, breathing, bewilder me, madden me!

MANA

[*Low and fascinated.*]

And you: it is wild and wonderful!

JULIAN

Say then — to-night! Shall it not be to-night? — At last to possess each other!

MANA

[*Eluding his embrace, rises.*]

No, but to be possessed! Not to possess each other — that can never be. But to be possessed by a power above us — yonder —

[*With a glad cry, she looks up through the boughs.*]

— Ah! my star — my star!

JULIAN

Mana —?

MANA

[*Mysteriously, pointing.*]

Hush: look: wish with me!

[*Looking upward.*]

Star white, star bright,
First star I've seen to-night,
I wish I may — I wish I might —
Have the wish I wish to-night!

JULIAN

Amen to that!

MANA

[*With a happy sigh.*]

Now — that takes me home to the garden!

JULIAN

With an incantation?

MANA

You'll not laugh at me? Listen: When I was a little girl, once at sunset, Father Peter took Mark and me into the garden. "Now, children, wish!" he said, and he showed us that star. "That little snowflake of fire," he said, "is the wish of all the world. Venus, men call it: Venus Uranus — the love of the mind. Whoever wishes upon that star — his wishes come true."

JULIAN

The love of the mind? Surely you mean — of the heart.

MANA

[*Shaking her head.*]

The heart forgets; only the mind remembers.

[*Moving away.*]

— Come; let's go.

JULIAN

Go! Where?

MANA

Home to the garden.

JULIAN

In the dark? — with nothing to eat?

MANA

How far is it?

JULIAN

Eighteen miles at least. We must wait till moonrise.

MANA

I forgot. Well, then,—[*With a glad thought*] — I know what!

JULIAN

What?

MANA

A camp-fire! — Here, by this cliff; it's sheltered here from the wind. Let's build a camp-fire.

JULIAN

Splendid!

MANA

I haven't built one since the redwoods.— Stars and a camp-fire: what fun!

JULIAN

I'll get some matches.

[JULIAN *goes into the bungalow.* MANA, *stooping down, begins to gather wood on the ground, humming to herself. The scene grows dimmer in the twilight.*]

MANA

" First star I've seen to-night "—

What fun!

[*Visibly a tranquil reverie steals over her. Laying an armful of the gathered dead wood near the rocky niche, she stands — with her back to the boulder — looking under the boughs toward the paling sunset. Silently where she is gazing the shadowy figure of* MARK *emerges and stands silhouetted.* MANA'S *lips part, and she reaches one hand toward him. Thus, motionless, they*

stand gazing at each other — shadow confronting shadow. Only the sound of the sea is faintly heard. Suddenly the voice of JULIAN *snaps the silence.*]

JULIAN

[*Coming from the house, holds up a little box.*] Here they are.

[*For an instant,* MANA *moves her hand across her eyes, but does not turn. As quickly the form of* MARK *disappears. She gazes again.* JULIAN *speaks lower.*]

Mana!

[MANA *seems not to hear. She moves again slowly to gather boughs, and resumes her humming. In the quiet pause,* JULIAN *watches her, fascinated, where she bends in the dusk, rapt in a kind of happy reverie. He murmurs to himself.*]

The drift-wood gatherer!

MANA

[*Humming.*]

Five, six:
Pick up sticks!

JULIAN

I'll have you painted like that, against the sea and the twilight.

MANA

[*Oblivious.*]

Seven, eight:
Lay them straight.

JULIAN

[*Approaching her.*]

Let me help you.

MANA

[*Handing him an armful of dead branches.*]

Here they are, Mark. "Lay them straight."

JULIAN

[*Stops abruptly, looking at her. Then, after a pause, speaks.*]

Why do you call me *Mark?*

MANA

[*Starting.*]

Ah!

[*Puzzled.*]

What did I say?

JULIAN

No matter.

[*He turns quickly and carries the branches behind the rock, beyond sight.* MANA *follows and, standing by the boulder, speaks to him behind it.*]

MANA

No: not the big ones first. Take that moss for kindling. Scoop the sand first. That's it.

[*Humming.*]

"I wish I may — I wish I might —!"

JULIAN

When did you learn to make camp-fires?

MANA

I? I've made thousands — back in the redwoods. Suppers and breakfasts for both.

JULIAN

For both?

MANA

He's always so fond of my flapjacks, even when I burn them.— Is there any buckwheat flour?

JULIAN

[*Coming from behind the rock.*]

I'll look in the cupboard and see.

MANA

No, let me. I'll find something. Start the fire.

JULIAN

Very well. [*Handing the box.*] Take some matches. There's a candle on the table.

MANA

What fun! It's just like old times.

[*Springing lightly toward the bungalow, she calls back.*]

Oh, and Mark, where's the griddle?

JULIAN

[*Starting again, eyes her keenly.*]

Under the shelf.

[*Speaking slowly, while his face darkens.*]

But my name isn't *Mark*.

MANA

[*Not hearing the last, speaks from the porch.*]

The dear camp-fire!

[*She goes indoors.* JULIAN *stands a moment, looking after her. Within the house a match is struck, and soon candle-light shines through the open door.* JULIAN'S *face grows darker with feeling; and he murmurs harshly.*]

JULIAN

So! — In the redwoods.— Mark!

[*He turns slowly and, gathering up more fuel, moves behind the rock. In a moment his stooping shadow is cast, by a flickering glow, across the scene. The glow increases, and smoke drifts upward along the stony ridges on the left. On*

the right, MARK *enters from the cypresses, and stands gaunt in the firelight. Deliberately, he crosses toward the rock, and pauses near it. Suddenly the stooped shadow of* JULIAN *lengthens to full height, and his voice comes sharp from behind the rock.*]

Who are you?

MARK

[*Quietly.*]

Mark Freeman.

JULIAN

What brings you here?

MARK

I was sent.

JULIAN

Who sent you?

MARK

The master.

JULIAN

Who's he?

MARK

Peter Dale.

JULIAN

[*Coming from behind the rock.*]

What do you want here?

MARK

Justice.

JULIAN

What do you mean? Justice for whom?

MARK

For the uncreated, and the living.

JULIAN

You talk rubbish. If you're sane, speak your business and be gone.

MARK

I come for Mana Dale.

JULIAN

By what authority?

MARK

Her father's.

JULIAN

Go back, and tell her father that her husband will bring her to-morrow. Mana is my wife.

MARK

[*Still more quiet.*]

That's a lie.

JULIAN

Take care, fellow. Leave this place.

MARK

With her.

JULIAN

Go, I say. This is my land. You are trespassing.

MARK

You, sir, are trespassing on the Creator's land.

JULIAN

[*Moving, in agitation.*]

What does her father want?

MARK

You know.

JULIAN

He insulted me and my family. I'll have no more dealings with him.

MARK

You'll not need.

JULIAN

My family! He, a gardener, of a breed of farmers and ranchmen: he to quibble about family! Let him know my father was a justice, and I am a senator. We are no common stock.

MARK

All men are common stock, sir. We all came [*He points to the sea*] from yonder. There's no quibble about democracy.

[*He turns, and moves toward the bungalow.* JULIAN *follows him feverishly.*]

JULIAN

Where are you going?

MARK

In there.

JULIAN

Stop. Tell Mr. Dale — Mana loves me. That is enough.

MARK

Yes; that's enough.

[*He moves on.*]

JULIAN

[*With sudden intensity, causing* MARK *to pause.*]

Wait!

[*Then slowly.*]

Peter Dale did not send you.

MARK

What do you mean?

JULIAN

You came for yourself — because *you* love Mana Dale.

MARK

[*Harshly.*]

That's not so.

JULIAN

All right. So be it. Then I appeal to your honor. Mana is the same as my wife.

MARK

[*Keenly.*]

How do you mean — the same?

JULIAN

To-morrow we're to be married.

MARK

Ah!

[*He moves on again.*]

JULIAN

She's chosen. It's too late.

MARK

For you; not for her.

JULIAN

Well, then, not for me: for *her* sake, keep away!

MARK

For *her* sake! — You're a rascal.

[*From within the house,* MANA's *voice calls:* "Julian!"]

JULIAN

She's coming! In God's name, go! Give me a chance.

MARK

There's only one chance. You've had it.

JULIAN

I know. You think I'm a scoundrel. But I've been tempted.

MARK

Tempted!

JULIAN

Yes; can you blame me? Her father gave me only this afternoon. We went riding. Well, we rode fast — and far.— Curse you, why did you follow?

MARK

[*With a scorching look.*]

Great God!

[*He turns to go into the house.* JULIAN *gets in his way.*]

JULIAN

[*Feverishly.*]

Stop. You don't know what she is to me. I've never loved so — but once. I won't lose her. That's why I lied. But listen! If you'll go away, I'll risk it. I'll tell her.

MARK

You promised before.

JULIAN

This time I will.

MARK

The truth: — not the trimmings!

JULIAN

[*Painfully.*]

Yes, the truth: all of it.

MANA

[*Calls from within.*]

See what I've found.

JULIAN

[*Wildly.*]

Go! I promise — by God!

MARK

[*Slowly.*]

Well — I'll take care of the horses.

[*He disappears in the darkness, left.* JULIAN *moves out of the fire's glow into the obscurity of the background, where his form, indistinctly visible, paces back and forth against the pale sea-line. From the bungalow,* MANA *reappears, carrying in her hand a covered basket. She comes lightly from the porch toward the fire, still humming to herself.*]

MANA

"Star white, star bright —"

Look! — I couldn't find the griddle, but see: here's lots of good things. And what do you think I found in this basket.— My dear! Where are you?

JULIAN

[*Huskily.*]

Here.

MANA

Come and see: A quaint little doll.

[*She lifts it from the basket.*]

We must take it home to Rosalie.

[*Approaching,* JULIAN *looks at her, trembling; takes the doll in his hand, then lets it fall to the ground.*]

JULIAN

It's hers.

MANA

[*Stooping to lift it, looks up suddenly as* JULIAN *turns away with a moaning sound.*]

Julian, what is it?

JULIAN

[*Shuddering.*]

You were right. They suffer. They are pursued. They look backward in pain, and they cannot escape.

MANA

[*Going to him.*]

My dear, what are you speaking of?

JULIAN

[*Wildly, pointing at the cypresses.*]

Of these curst things: these memories with dead arms and stricken limbs — these haunted human plants, that have sprung up, and live on, where the Creator blasted them in the sowing.

MANA

Darling, forget my words. Those were strange, sickly thoughts.— See: I'm quite happy now.

JULIAN

Happy in ignorance, my Mana.

MANA

What's happened? Why have you changed so?

JULIAN

God! — O fool! — Why of all spots should I have brought you here!

MANA

Here: to your bungalow?

JULIAN

A haunted house! But I will tell you — yes, I *must* tell you — why.

MANA

Haunted?

JULIAN

It was because I wanted to dare them here in their den. I wanted to bring you — you, star-white, holy, — here to the place of the plague, and make it clean for always. I wanted you to drive them back into their own hell — these devils of days that are gone!

[MANA *holds out the doll.*]

MANA

Julian — is it this?

JULIAN

[*Takes it again, stares at it blankly, then looks closer.*]

There they are: Do you see those stitches — how many, how small, how patient?

MANA

It is finely sewn.

JULIAN

[*Agonized.*]

Those are *mad* stitches, Mana. Ah, God, they'll drive me mad now.

[*He flings the doll into the darkness.*]

MANA

My dear, my dear, let me help you.

JULIAN

It was not I — not I! I'm no worse than the others. I'm just a victim. Why do they mock *me!*

MANA

Be calm. Tell me.

JULIAN

And now they'll tear *you* from me!

MANA

Don't!

JULIAN

If I tell, you won't leave me?

MANA

Don't fear.

JULIAN

Those stitches, Mana —

[*He pauses.*]

MANA

[*Gently.*]

They were hers?

JULIAN

Hester's: her mother's.

MANA

She sewed them for Rosalie?

JULIAN

Before. While she was waiting.

MANA

Waiting?

JULIAN

[*Pointing toward the bungalow.*]

There.

MANA

I see, dear.

JULIAN

I loved her. She wanted to be hidden away, because —

[*He buries his face.*]

MANA

She was afraid?

JULIAN

She loved me. At first it was all too sudden to marry. And then — then she *would not* marry me, because —

[*His voice breaks.*]

MANA

[*Pitifully.*]

Don't fear.

JULIAN

Because —

[*Looking in* MANA's *face, he reaches for her hand, with a cry.*]

Ah, no — you'll leave me!

MANA

[*Caressing his hand.*]

Never fear!

JULIAN

Promise me! — You do promise?

MANA

Of course, dear.

JULIAN

Thank God! — Ah, now I can tell. You see.— It was because.— She would not marry me, because — [*He breaks down.*]— I can't!

MANA

[*Gently.*]

There's no need.

JULIAN

[*Controlling himself.*]

Because of — of the madness. It came upon her — *after.* You see — there was a family taint, so she thought — she told me — she dreamed —

MANA

[*Murmurs.*]

Julian!

JULIAN

She dreamed it — would — be — born — blind.

MANA

[*Faintly.*]

Rosalie?

JULIAN

[*Very slowly.*]

And she sewed, and she sewed, and — it — *happened.* And she died — there.

MANA

[*With deep pity.*]

And you did not know — her family?

JULIAN

[*Staring at her.*]

Her family!

[*He grasps* MANA's *arm — his features twitching — and speaks huskily.*]

Yes, yes, that was it — *her* family. I — *I* did not — know.

[*With bowed head, he sinks upon the ground, clinging to* MANA's *knees. She caresses his forehead.*]

MANA

It is over, dear. It's over now. The ghosts are gone. See, the cypresses are beautiful in the starlight.

JULIAN

[*Hysterically.*]

Yes, it's over. And you won't leave me?

MANA

[*Gently.*]

Why should I?

JULIAN

No, no, that's it. Why should you? You'll tell them that, won't you? That's what I told your father.

MANA

You told my father — this?

JULIAN

Not all, of course; but enough —

MANA

But I thought —

JULIAN

He wouldn't listen, you see.

MANA

Wouldn't listen!

JULIAN

[*Growing more hysterical.*]

He wouldn't let me explain.— He wasn't fair! He wasn't fair!

MANA

Father Peter — not fair!

JULIAN

No! I began to tell him all — everything: how I'd seen a specialist —

MANA

Specialist —

JULIAN

How 'twas years ago, anyway, and the chances are all with me — absolutely. But he wouldn't listen!

MANA

Chances?

JULIAN

A thousand to one — it could never happen again. Never! — it couldn't, it couldn't!

MANA

I don't understand.

JULIAN

Ah, no matter; I'm mad with it all. But it's over now. You've said so yourself, Mana. It's over; it's all over. And you've promised.— And you'll tell them so, God bless you! You've promised not to leave me because of it.

MANA

Because of the past — you mean.

JULIAN

Yes, yes; and the future's all safe — positively.

MANA

Safe?

JULIAN

No danger, no danger at all. So what do we care for your father now? My God! We'll face him together, won't we? — him, and that other fellow — curse him!

MANA

Julian, Julian, I don't understand what you're saying. What danger? — to whom?

JULIAN

[*Wildly.*]

None, I say,— none!

MANA

Be calm, dear. You frighten me. Tell me. Is my father opposed to our marriage?

JULIAN

He left it to you; entirely to you.

MANA

But what did he say?

JULIAN

He said he had nothing to do with it, nothing! And that's true.

MANA

[*Appealingly.*]

But why? why?

JULIAN

The child, of course.— The damnable prudery! He's prejudiced.

MANA

No — not Father Peter!

JULIAN

[*Growing wilder.*]

I tell you, he wouldn't even hear me! When he talked of the blindness, I told him my own doctor gave a thousand chances —

MANA

[*Breathing quicker.*]

The blindness.— Your doctor!

JULIAN

Wouldn't that satisfy God Himself? A thousand chances!

MANA

[*Drawing away from him, appalled.*]

No, no, Julian! — not *you!*

[*They gaze for a moment in each other's eyes — fearfully.* JULIAN'S *eyes fall. He reaches toward her.*]

JULIAN

Mana — Mana! You've promised. I mustn't lose you. I can't!

MANA

[*With an anguished cry.*]

O God — not you, not you!

JULIAN

[*Clinging to her, hysterically.*]

I can't, Mana! I can't lose you. You've promised! You've promised me, Mana. I love you! You know how I love you. I can't — I won't lose you! I won't! No, Mana — Mana!

MANA

[*Tearing herself from him.*]

Let me go!

[*She rushes into the bungalow, closing the door.* JULIAN *stands for an instant, dazed, swaying, muttering:* "Mana, Mana, no!" *Then, recovering himself, he staggers after her. As he reaches the porch, the candle-light from the window is obscured by a shadow, which emerges from behind the porch pillar. Before him stands* MARK *who has entered from the darkness beyond.* JULIAN *pauses and draws back, breathing hard. Then he speaks huskily.*]

JULIAN

She's mine. She's promised.

MARK

[*Stepping toward him.*]

You lie.

[*Seizing* JULIAN *with both arms, he lifts him bodily, with a mighty clutch, and bears him into the middleground. Here the two forms sway in the firelight, now flickering from its embers. Partly freeing himself,* JULIAN *cries out, struggling for release.*]

JULIAN

You devil, let go!

[*Gagging him with one hand,* MARK *twists backward* JULIAN'S *torse, and forces him backward, writhing, beyond the glow of the fire. At* JULIAN'S *cry, the door has opened, and* MANA *looks forth, straining to see.*]

MANA

[*Groping outward.*]

Who is there?

[*Silently the forms wrestle backward. On the dim verge of the cliff they pause, panting. There, with a sudden jerk, one is flung outward, falling, and disappears with a quivering cry.*]

MANA

[*Calls, in fear.*]

What's that?

[*Stumbling toward the cliff, she confronts the tall form of* MARK, *moving into the firelight.*]

You? — Is it *you!*

[*With a smothered, half-joyful sound, she runs to him, crouching close, as for protection.*]

MARK

[*Looking down at her.*]

Don't worry.

MANA

[*Faintly.*]

Where is he?

MARK

[*Points toward the cliff.*]

Below there.— I wasn't taking any chances.

MANA

[*Drawing back.*]

Mark! — What have you done?

MARK

[*Slowly, staring ahead of him.*]

I pulled a weed.

[*With a low, moaned cry,* Mana *sinks on the ground, cowering. The fire goes out in darkness. Faintly, from the right, a whistle sounds; from the left, a far motor-horn. Below the cliff, dully, the surf beats.*

CURTAIN.

ACT THIRD

ACT THIRD

The garden: late afternoon. Long shadows of eucalyptus trees fall across the flame-colored flowers. Far on the mountains the slant sunbeams sharpen the ridges of the golden canyons. In the central path stands ROSALIE, *alone. She seems bewildered. She is listening. From the left rises a droning of men's voices in song. The sleepy sound draws nearer and, along the middleground path, laborers enter in file. They are Mexican half-breeds and Japanese coolies, bearing on their backs brush-heaps of small trees. Some of these have fallen and clutter the paths. Passing through the flowers, they disappear, right, the Mexican workmen murmuring their stuttered song, the Japanese in stolid silence.* While they have been passing,* ROSALIE *has picked up a small broken branch, and stands fingering it, as she tries to hum the men's minor-keyed song, which dies away beyond the scene.*

* Throughout the act, at times, similar workmen pass — singly, or in small groups — across the scene, in the background.

From the right enters a young woman, dressed as a trained nurse. She has a hushed, impersonal air. She comes toward ROSALIE.

THE YOUNG WOMAN

[*In a low voice.*]

Little girl.

ROSALIE

[*Starting.*]

Who are *you?*

THE YOUNG WOMAN

They want you in the house.

ROSALIE

Why are the paths all mixed? They're full of broken things. I can't find the way.

THE YOUNG WOMAN

Take my hand.

ROSALIE

It's been a long, long afternoon.— Where's Mana?

THE YOUNG WOMAN

Come.

ROSALIE

[*Going with her.*]

Who wants me? What's the matter with the garden to-day?

[*They go into the greenhouse. From the right enter* MRS. HENSHAWE *and* SPOFFORD. MRS. HENSHAWE'S *eyes are red with weeping, and occasionally she sobs.* SPOFFORD *is divided in his attention between a bundle of newspapers, which he holds under his arm — reading from one which is open — and his solicitude for* MRS. HENSHAWE. *Together they pass slowly along the middleground path.*]

MRS. HENSHAWE

My poor boy!

SPOFFORD

Such hideous headlines! — Pray be calm.

MRS. HENSHAWE

And to think we should have to hunt for her — now!

SPOFFORD

The afternoon editions are worse than this morning's.

[*Mutters as he reads.*]

"Senator's Mystery Unsolved"—

MRS. HENSHAWE

Ha! I'll solve it, if he lives — my poor boy!

SPOFFORD

[*Consolingly.*]

There, there!

MRS. HENSHAWE

Fall from a cliff — him! Ridiculous!

SPOFFORD

[*Muttering.*]

"Alleged Bride denies she is Married."— Hideous!

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Pausing to look at the wheelbarrow in the path.*]

Oh, *I* have my suspicions!

SPOFFORD

Suspicions: what are they?

MRS. HENSHAWE

Well, if I'm wrong, she'll get married, that's all — and stop these scandalous newspapers.

SPOFFORD

Of course. We'll find her at once. She must get married — before any *further* editions!

MRS. HENSHAWE

And give peace to my poor, dying boy!

SPOFFORD

Bear up, Sally. Their marriage now may solve — everything.

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*As they go out, seizes* SPOFFORD'S *arm, and points suddenly off scene, toward the left foreground.*]

There! — That fellow!

[*They go out. On the path behind the bench* MARK *enters, followed soon by* PETER. *On his entrance, there is evident in* MARK'S *face and movements a new and feverish energy, controlled but burning inward. Pausing in the path, he breaks suddenly a flower from its stalk and mechanically tears its petals to pieces, while his eyes search the garden.* PETER *enters slowly, holding in both hands his inverted straw hat, into which he looks down pensively.*]

PETER

It's breed, Mark; breed. That's the only rock-bottom. When folks are bred thoroughbred, these things won't happen.

MARK

[*Murmurs.*]

She isn't here.

PETER

Pigs for pork, humans for happiness: then some day we may breed the Three Graces.

MARK

All day she's kept from me.

PETER

Love, Will-power, Reason: these three. And the greatest of these is Reason.

[*Glancing at the flower, which* MARK *has torn and scattered on the path, he touches* MARK'S *arm.*]

You're losing the pollen.

MARK

[*Starting.*]

Too bad! too bad! Can't be mended now.

PETER

Oh, time and tending mend most things.

MARK

[*Searchingly.*]

Will he die, you think?

PETER

Believe they're expecting the surgeon from San Francisco.

MARK

[*Introspective.*]

It's murder, isn't it!

PETER

That might be the word, if the man dies.

MARK

Death makes no difference. The man she loves — I forgot that! He was the man she loves. And I did it!

PETER

Couldn't trust him. You know, I sent you.

MARK

Yes, but that's not all.— My God, sir!

[*With sudden conviction, he turns to* PETER.]

I must tell you *why!*

PETER

No need, I guess.

MARK

[*Bursting forth.*]

I love Mana! I love her. That's why I did it.

PETER

[*With a faint smile.*]

Just so.

MARK

I never knew till last night. Last night — I thought of you, yes — and her, God knows: but God knows I thought of myself.

PETER

[*Nodding.*]

All of us: just so.

MARK

All at once, like black thunder, I knew it: I wanted her — I wanted her!

PETER

Have you — told her?

MARK

Told her! Would she ever forgive me? Besides — could I call it love! The man she loves — to kill him, in fight, like a strong beast!

PETER

Don't be too hard on strong beasts. They make the best men — with right breeding.— You saved her.

MARK

Yes, but I wanted her myself.

PETER

I guess there's no salvation without selfishness, nor love without passion. Come, Mark; passion ain't the first of graces, but it made you strong last night. Thank God for it; that's all. I do.

MARK

But, I tell you, it made me blind. I might have waited and protected her — not killed him.

PETER

True enough. But you didn't.

MARK

No, I didn't even stop to pity. The whole horror maddened me. I felt like Samson in the dark. I could have pulled the sky down. And there, when we stood on the cliff —

PETER

Just a question! — If he'd thrown *you* over, how about Mana then?

MARK

I keep living it through again!

PETER

Why not forget it? — Have you seen Mana to-day?

MARK

Three times. Each time she looked at me — God, such a look! Then she almost fled from me. Now she's disappeared.

PETER

Have you looked for her?

MARK

Yes, but I was wrong. I'll not give her any more pain.

PETER

Why not tell her — what you've told me?

MARK

Oh, I know now what to do. I'll keep out of her sight — for good.

[*He turns away with a gesture of passionate suffering.* PETER, *with an anxious look, follows him.*]

PETER

Just be sure it's for good. You're not calculating —?

MARK

Don't worry.— To die would be good — good as a deep plunge and a long, cold swim out to sea. But that wouldn't square me with myself, would it? No; I know what to do.— Good-by.

PETER

Are you wanting — the law?

MARK

The truth. He lied to them about last night, and that has given me my freedom. Well, I don't want it — from him. I'm going to tell the facts.

[*He starts away, right.* PETER *doesn't move, but speaks quietly.*]

PETER

Mark!

MARK

[*Pausing.*]

Yes, sir.

PETER

You've known her and me — twenty years?

MARK

Twenty odd, sir.

PETER

Seems like she deserves your confidence ahead o' strangers.

MARK

[*Returning slowly.*]

Why, you're right, sir. You're always right. I'll tell her first — what I've told you. Where is she?

PETER

Somewheres in the garden, I guess.

[*They go out, by the foreground path, left. From the left middleground* SPOFFORD *enters, looks about, and passes off, right, round the greenhouse. Presently the tall cacti in the background are parted, and* MANA *emerges. She is dressed in a simple, flower-like gown of gray, and comes slowly down the central path to the pool. Here for a moment she stands silent and rigid, then sinks to a crouching posture on the margin, staring in the water. Behind her, from*

the left foreground, PETER *enters, sees her and approaches quietly. Bending over, he touches her with a light caress, and speaks low.*]

PETER

Is the pool filled with tears?

MANA

[*Without turning, shivers.*]

With ice — with ice. Last night — there was a frost in the garden last night.

PETER

A few petals nipped, that's all.

MANA

And morning and noon and afternoon, the strange sunshine freezes. Father Peter, only *you* are the same. All other things have changed.

PETER

To grow is to change.

MANA

And to die! — I think I died last night.

PETER

Then I guess you went straight to heaven, girl. Come, a kiss for St. Peter!

[*With quaint tenderness, he draws her to him. Oblivious, she looks away, right.*]

MANA

Perhaps *he* is dying now. But how can I go to him — now!

PETER

Better not.

MANA

Poor thing of fate — poor Julian! Ah, Father Peter, poor Love, that awakes in the dark, and thinks to know the awakener.— The dreadful dark!

PETER

We mustn't be afraid of the dark, dear. We must strike a light.

MANA

It's not that he deceived me and himself. It's to think that God was deceived in us both: that God himself stumbled in the dark!

PETER

Guess 'twouldn't be the first time since the creation.

MANA

Why couldn't I see even dimly! Why didn't the truth scorch me, before I touched it? How could I follow it, step by step, blindly to the edge of the cliff — ah, hideous! — What's to become of him now?

PETER

Death ain't as certain as life.

MANA

[*Turning, startled.*]

Oh, do you think they'd condemn him?

PETER

There's nobody been informed, has there?

MANA

Not yet. But would it be murder?

PETER

Might be called, if they knew.

MANA

And could he be — hanged for it?

PETER

Oh! [*With a pause*] — Just who were you speaking of?

MANA

Why, Mark.

PETER

[*Smiling faintly.*]

Oh, him!

MANA

They couldn't — they couldn't condemn him! It was I — I that brought it upon him: all that crime and horror because of me! He did it for me — to save me.

PETER

To save more than you, my girl.

MANA

I know — I know — all the future! All that you've taught me — I forgot. For a glamour — a dreadful dream! Oh, dear Father!

PETER

Maybe it's been my mistake.

MANA

Yours?

PETER

Maybe,— I don't say. See that fence? I'm a gardener. Inside that fence here is mine — to make experiments. Maybe I've tried to experiment — outside the fence.

MANA

What do you mean?

PETER

Why — this, child: I said to myself, years ago: "Peter, you've got the chance. Mana, your girl, she's hardy stock but fine, and California's a rare raising ground. You raise up your girl for happiness,— just joy, and clear thoughts, and love — not the old wrong things of the past. Raise her up for To-morrow." Well, my dear [*He points at the*

flowers], I've done that for *them*, and succeeded. But you see how it is: To-morrow ain't here yet — for us.

MANA

Ah, but it will come! Don't say it won't! Don't deny yourself because of me.

PETER

[*Ruminating.*]

Oh, I guess it'll come — for all. But slower for us. The world's a bigger garden than mine, and it needs a bigger gardener. But the One I'm trying to learn from knows the business.

MANA

What one?

PETER

The love that reasons, my dear: Imagination. Some folks call it God.

MANA

[*Putting her face against him.*]

Whom I forgot! — Oh, I have sinned, I have sinned!

PETER

[*Caressingly.*]

Come: I don't take much stock in sin. Let's forget sin, shall we?

MANA

And you forgive me? God bless you!

[*She kisses him; then turns away.*]

But he — he will never forgive me.

PETER

Mark?

MANA

I know it. I have seen him to-day, watching me with strange eyes. It was terrible!

PETER

What like?

MANA

It haunts me. He's never looked at me so before. I couldn't stand his eyes. I crept away and hid. Three times: three times to-day!

PETER

I've been waiting for to-day — some years.

MANA

[*With amazement.*]

Waiting — for to-day!

PETER

Since I rooted him out of the mountains. He was a prime young stripling, and I wanted to see how

he'd transplant here to the garden.— Well, the most I could do then was to tie a white string to him, and just wait.

MANA

A white string!

PETER

Yes. To-day, though, it looks like a blue ribbon.

[*Smiling happily, he starts away.*]

But you're the prize judge.

MANA

I don't understand.

PETER

You will soon — when you meet him.

MANA

How?

PETER

Oh, you'll know by a sign. Just obey it — both of you.

MANA

Obey what sign?

PETER

When love has learned to reason, obey love.— If you want me, I'm over yonder.

[*He points off scene, left.*]

MANA

[*Following him.*]

Don't go.

PETER

[*Pausing to return her caress.*]

Can't keep the Lord waiting any longer, my dear. To-day's my big job.

[*Laborers* * *are passing in the middleground. He shows her the brushwood on their backs.*]

See those little fruit trees? Nigh a million seedlings I've tested and thrown away — just to pick out one, the best. The others are burned in the rubbish. So, you see, I must finish my job. To-day — it's one in a million!

[*He goes out, left.* MANA *follows him with her eyes; then she turns and moves slowly toward the greenhouse. In her path lies* MARK'S *garden prong. Seeing it, she pauses with a look of reminiscence. Then she lifts it, examines the bend in the iron; tries to bend it, but cannot. Meantime* MRS. HENSHAWE *enters, in the left middleground. Seeing* MANA, *she sets her features hard, and approaches, in slow-moving haste.*]

* Two of these workmen, among the last to pass, pick up the fallen branches which clutter the path, and carry them away.

MRS. HENSHAWE

So, there you are!

[MANA *drops the iron, closing her eyes, as if struck.*]

And where have you kept yourself? Don't you know — don't you know that he wants you?

MANA

[*Without turning.*]

I know.

MRS. HENSHAWE

You know, and you stay away? God above! It's bad enough that he asked to be brought to *this* house. But now, now you — your lover, your husband — for he's as good as your husband — lying in there at death's door, and you stay here in the garden! — What do you say?

MANA

[*In a low voice.*]

I said nothing.

MRS. HENSHAWE

Nothing! Have you seen the newspapers?

[MANA *quivers.*]

My stars! Was ever such a — such a — But I'm no nincumpoop, miss. I have a nose. I can smell a rat, even in a garden. I saw one just now — with a red shirt.

MANA

[*Turning.*]

Mrs. Henshawe!

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*With increasing rapidity.*]

That's my name, Miss Dale, and it ought to be yours. It ought to be yours, this minute. Julian wants it to be. He's sent word by me that he wants it to be, before — before — in case he shouldn't — recover. [*Weeping.*] Oh, you *cold*-hearted girl! Why don't you speak?

MANA

[*With wonder.*]

Do *you* want it to be?

MRS. HENSHAWE

I? The Lord knows, *I* don't — except for Julian, for his sake. I'm pleading for him. He may die.

MANA

[*Intense and quiet.*]

You know the reason.

MRS. HENSHAWE

Don't talk to me of reasons! I won't talk to you of red shirts. I say — just forget everything and get married! Mr. Spofford will marry you right off. Julian asks it.

MANA

I'm sure Julian wouldn't ask it — now — if he were well.

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Exasperated.*]

How could he be well! That terrible fall last night! — I don't see how he slipped, but he says so. Anyway, he's been so generous, so chivalrous to you. Just as soon as he came to himself, he told the reporter, in the motor, that you were secretly married to him. He shielded your reputation. And now, what do you mean by denying your marriage — publicly — in the newspapers!

[*Breathing hard with pent-up emotion,* MANA *turns quickly to speak, but curbs herself. Then she murmurs low.*]

MANA

I denied nothing. We are not married.

MRS. HENSHAWE

But you know you've got to be. Come, don't be a fool. It's not only for him.— You know it's for your own sake. You went alone with Julian to his bungalow, at night, in the lonely woods. And another man followed you! The newspapers have it all. So you *know* you've got to get married.— Don't be silly!

MANA

Starting as at a quick sting.]

Silly!

[*Her voice and face kindle.*]

Dear God, my friend, you and I are women. Do we not hear that word *silly* ringing in our souls, like the judgment bell: Silly women — silly women! Think of us! Our eyes — *ours* — hold the doom of the ages; the life of a planet pleads at our lips; the growth and beauty of our species — they wait on our smile. And yet — oh, pity ourselves! — Our eyes are ravished by a flying moment; darkness, death, — with a kiss we sow them in the upturned gazes of children; and the choice of a thousand years — what is it? — A flash of blinding desire!

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Gasping.*]

Now, why in the world —

MANA

[*Swept by her feeling.*]

Ah, why indeed in the world! Is it only to conceive and bear — the children of silly women? Have we never conceived the children of God? — borne and suckled them in clear dreams? Have we never selected what breed our bodies shall bring forth? — Not we, Mrs. Henshawe! We silly women only know

— we have got to get married: for the sake of our lovers, for the sake of ourselves, for the newspapers, for every sake in the world — except for the sake of our children. And so, my friend, we women say to each other: *Don't be silly!*

MRS. HENSHAWE

My stars! You needn't burst out like that. I don't like such allusions. I'm sure we're all the children of God — if it must come to that. But we needn't worry about it on week days.— I was talking of Julian. I say you have every reason in the world to marry him.

MANA

[*With quiet tensity.*]

Would Rosalie's mother think so?

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*With a scared look.*]

Did he speak of all that?

MANA

I thought you knew.

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Fidgeting to control herself.*]

Well, well, my child, as you say, we women are creatures of a kiss. We must take the consequences with the kisses.

MANA

Though the lips be poisoned!

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Increasingly moved.*]

It's as old as Babylon. The Bible women had their share of it! Why shouldn't we? [*Hoarsely.*] I — I have had mine. Wild oats, wild oats — woman must take them to her mill and grind them.

MANA

Yes, woman must reap them in her maidenhood. Woman must stand in the wild oats, like Ruth, waiting — with love in her eyes! Ah, dear Mrs. Henshawe, *must* she?

[MANA *puts one hand gently on* MRS. HENSHAWE'S *shoulder. For an instant the older woman returns her look of tenderness with a glance half fearful, half in tears. Then, embarrassed, she shakes* MANA *off, with a shrug of affected unconcern.*]

MRS. HENSHAWE

Why, why, after all, the poets sing of it. True love is blind. Roses must have thorns. It's not for us women to grow scientific and put an end to romance and poetry.

MANA

The poetry of truth, the romance of reason — when shall our poets make love-songs of those?
[*From the greenhouse, the* TRAINED NURSE *enters.*]

THE NURSE

Miss Dale.

MRS. HENSHAWE

Heavens! Is he worse?

THE NURSE

He is very low. He would like to speak with Miss Dale.

MANA

[*Quietly.*]

Very well.

[THE NURSE *goes out.*]

MRS. HENSHAWE

You are going in to him?

MANA

[*Slowly.*]

Mrs. Henshawe: would you have me kill your son?

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Staring.*]

Good God!

MANA

I *could* not lie to him, even if I would. He has looked in my eyes before this day. He must never look there again — till he is well enough to bear the truth.

[*She turns away.*]

MRS. HENSHAWE

But I tell you —

[*Enter* SPOFFORD, *right. He carries a newspaper.*]

Ignatius, talk to her! She is heartless — cruel!

SPOFFORD

[*Approaching.*]

My child, we have been hunting for you.

MRS. HENSHAWE

She won't go to him.

SPOFFORD

Mana, this is not becoming — not right.

MANA

Uncle Spofford, yesterday, here, was it you who urged me not to marry Julian?

SPOFFORD

Yesterday, yes; but to-day that's all different.

MANA

Do you urge me differently now?

SPOFFORD

To marry him: surely. It's a matter of honor. It's your duty now to yourself. Yesterday, I warned you, lest you should do anything rash. But you did not heed. You have been very rash, very shockingly rash.

[*Showing the newspaper.*]

Look at these headlines: shameful! After such things, in this case there is only *one* means to redeem your womanly repute. As a priest of the church, I offer to perform it: the sacrament of marriage.

MANA

[*Very low.*]

In this case, I should prefer another sacrament to that.

SPOFFORD

What?

MANA

" When this corruptible shall put on incorruption " —[*Poignantly*]— Ah, if this flesh is corruptible, are there no priests of God who shall refuse to perform sacrament of corruption?

SPOFFORD

Do you call marriage such?

MANA

No, but your profanement of marriage.

SPOFFORD

You mean — the church's sacrament?

MANA

No, but your profanement of the church's. The true church is His who loved the children. Many have been His disciples. There was a priest named Mendel. Flowers were his flock. Reason was his holiness. The law of heredity was his prophet's staff. He, Uncle Spofford,— he would never have offered to perform sacrament between Julian and me.

SPOFFORD

I don't know whom you speak of. I never heard of him. But I know you are a woman — a young woman, whom I love as a daughter. And young women cannot overstep the customs of sex in society without personal dishonor. Public opinion does not permit it.

MANA

As you say. And have you thought, Uncle Spofford, what this public opinion *does* permit? — The idiot to have offspring, the criminal to curse his birthright, the insane to instill madness in their children's brains!

SPOFFORD

Let me tell you —

MANA

This public opinion permits palaces to be built for its own evil broods: prisons to preserve them, asylums to nourish them, and the fair bodies of young men and women, as temples, to rear their monstrous generations.— Must you and I stand for such public opinion?

MRS. HENSHAWE

That settles it, Ignatius. That confirms my suspicions. Now I can tell you why she talks like this.

[*Reënter, right, the* TRAINED NURSE.]

THE NURSE

Miss Dale, the surgeon has come.

[THE NURSE *goes out.*]

SPOFFORD

[*To* MANA.]

You heard?

MANA

[*Quietly.*]

I heard.

SPOFFORD

My dear child, whether he lives or dies, this marriage should be. Is there no appeal I can make to your heart or your womanhood?

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Tearfully.*]

For Julian's sake!

MANA

[*Anguished.*]

Dear Mrs. Henshawe — Uncle Spofford — last night, there was a dark cliff — and a miracle! Julian fell — he, he fell — and *saved* himself and me. To-day, here in this sunlight, there hangs a darker cliff: and you and she are pushing me — pushing me to the edge; but if I fall, Julian and I, and more than we, will go down into hell.— I'm weak, dear friends. Don't push me!

SPOFFORD

[*To* Mrs. Henshawe, *with a look of troubled questioning.*]

What's she saying?

MRS. HENSHAWE

[*Hurrying him off.*]

Come; let's go to him.

MANA

Tell him, I send him — peace.

[Mrs. Henshawe *and* Spofford *go off, right.* Mana *gazes after them, shuddering. Behind her, left, enters* Mark. *With swift motion, he approaches her — his face lighted with inward*

fire. Just behind her, he pauses and visibly controls himself. Then, speaking, his voice rings wild and strange — as of one in pain speaking through him.]

MARK

Mana!

[*At his voice,* MANA *turns, glances in fear, and — wild-eyed — springs away.*]

Wait! This moment is mine.

[MANA *pauses, compelled.*]

I have killed this man.

MANA

[*Hardly vocal.*]

Mark!

MARK

That's nothing. I weeded him out. But that's not it. There's more.

MANA

More?

MARK

You must know why.

MANA

[*Mechanically.*]

Why —

MARK

Last night.— At first I thought — I thought only the master had sent me.

MANA

Didn't he?

MARK

Yes; but then — I stood nearby in the woods. You were gathering boughs. It was darkish. He'd gone in the house. I came closer. You were standing still.

MANA

[*Awe-struck.*]

It was you!

MARK

I thought you were looking at me. You didn't move. He came back.

MANA

[*Murmurs.*]

You were gone!

MARK

That was the beginning. I waited. After I'd talked with the man —

MANA

You spoke with him?

MARK

I went back in the dark and circled round you.

The firelight made a mist. The trees were like hell. They wrestled — and reached long arms; twisted their necks and looked at me with eyes — terrible eyes — they were yours.

MANA

Mine!

MARK

Then I stood near the bungalow. You were talking together. I couldn't hear what you said. But soon — you rushed in the door. Then the man was following. Then —

MANA

Ah!

MARK

Then I knew. And a roaring burst in my ears, and a lightning across my eyes. I grappled, and with these hands I uprooted him.

MANA

To save me from him!

MARK

Yes. And to save you — for myself.

MANA

For — yourself?

MARK

Mana! — Mana, I love you. That was why!

MANA

[*Breathless.*]

Mark!

MARK

It was all my life in one instant.

[*With a deep cry.*]

I have told you! Now, good-by.

[*He starts away.*]

MANA

Where are you going?

MARK

To him.

MANA

Why?

MARK

I owe him the truth. He told me last night that I came for you — for myself. I denied it, but now I see he was right.

MANA

No!

MARK

And he was the man you love. It was murder.

MANA

[*Tense and low.*]

But not — yours.

[MARK *is moving away.*]

Wait. *I* have not spoken — yet. This moment is also mine.

MARK

[*Pausing.*]

Yours?

MANA

You have made it mine. Now — now I know myself.

MARK

[*With vague questioning.*]

Mana?

MANA

Listen! When we were children — in the mountains — we made our camp-fire — together.

MARK

In the redwoods.

MANA

"Five, six:
Pick up sticks;"

You remember?

MARK

[*Murmuring.*]

"Seven, eight:
Lay them straight."

MANA

Last night, in the cypresses, I was making the fire — there.

MARK

Where?

MANA

Mark, in the redwoods — not the cypresses.

MARK

[*Staring.*]

But how —?

MANA

How could it be? I don't know. I was there — in my thoughts. In my thoughts, you were with me there. And soon — there you stood, in the sunset. You stood still. I thought you were looking at me.

MARK

[*In wonder.*]

You — you were looking at me!

MANA

Then you were gone. But soon, as I picked up the sticks, I thought you came close beside me. "Let me help you," you said. I did not look, but I gave you the sticks. Then I said: "Mark, lay them straight!" And suddenly *he* answered "*Why?* Why do you call me Mark?" And I saw it was he. Then I wondered. Love is strange.

MARK

[*Yearningly.*]

Love! — love, Mana?

MANA

Ah, but now I do not wonder. If he were the man I love — I should not be here.

MARK

If he were! —If?

MANA

I should be there, with him. If he dies, that deed will also be mine, for I brought it upon you.

MARK

No!

MANA

But he is not the man I love — nor ever was.

MARK

[*Slowly, gazing at her.*]

Mana, is it you and me?

MANA

[*Simply.*]

All my life — all our lives — it has been.

MARK

[*With awe.*]

And we did not know: no one knew.

MANA

Yes, one.

MARK

The master?

MANA

I think so. He said we should know, when we met, by a sign.

MARK

[*With a great breath.*]

Ah, it is true. I see it now! His sign is upon us both. It was he who mated us, when we did not know. I am happy.

MANA

We are happy.

MARK

Yes; even though I have killed this man.

MANA

[*Murmurs.*]

We!

MARK

Is this blasphemy which we speak? Yet it is love.

MANA

Mark!

MARK

Mana!

[*They move toward each other.* MARK *draws suddenly back, with a hoarse cry.*]

Ah! he is lying there. It may soon be death. I must go.

MANA

No! If you do — for you it may be death.

MARK

It will be law.

MANA

The law of men! The law of love is wiser.

MARK

Shall I take my life from him, and also my love?

MANA

Would you take the life of your love? Then we must go together.

MARK

No; the act was mine.

MANA

But the instigation — mine.

MARK

The law will not say so.

MANA

Then the law will quibble. Will you kill the truth — for that?

MARK

Ah, God! Mana, Mana, the web of fate is around us. The deed cannot be undone; and the law of men —

[*Enter the* TRAINED NURSE, *right.*]

THE NURSE

Miss Dale —

MARK

Ah, you hear —

THE NURSE

Miss Dale, the Senator — The doctors have consulted together. They send you word —

MANA

[*Feverishly.*]

Speak!

THE NURSE

He will recover.

MANA

[*Faintly.*]

Go!

[THE NURSE *goes out. During a long, silent moment,* MANA *and* MARK *look at each other.*]

MANA

The law of men is appeased.

MARK

By the love of God!

[*He takes her hand. In the middleground, left,* PETER *enters, quietly. In his hand he carries a little tree, partly wrapped in paper. By the central path he pauses, in the sunset. Behind him far mountains and sky, petaled with radiant fire, seem to reflect the many-colored gladness of the flowers.*

MARK *looks wonderingly in* MANA'S *face.*]

Mana, yesterday we were children — playing together.

MANA

[*Happily.*]

So we shall be — to-morrow.

PETER

[*Glancing from his little tree to where they stand.*]

One in a million!

[*He gazes with a quaint smile. His gaze seems to fondle all the garden.*]

CURTAIN.

THE END

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